

THE
FATIMIDS
AND THEIR
SUCCESSORS
IN YAMAN



*The History of an
Islamic Community*

Arabic edition and English summary of
volume 7 of Idrīs 'Imād al Dīn's
'Uyūn al-akhbār

By Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid
in collaboration with
Paul E. Walker & Maurice A. Pomerantz

THE FATIMIDS AND THEIR SUCCESSORS IN YAMAN

The Institute of Ismaili Studies

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The Institute of Ismaili Studies

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‘ <i>Uyūn al-akhbār</i> , vol. 7 (Arabic Text, Bibliography and Indices)	

Foreword

The recovery of Ismaili manuscript sources in modern times has revealed the diversity of this rich literary heritage, ranging from legal and other exoteric texts to treatises on *ta'wīl* or esoteric exegesis, the hallmark of Ismaili thought, and a variety of theological and philosophical works. However, the modern progress in Ismaili studies has also shown that the Ismaili *dā'īs*, who were at the same time the scholars and authors of their community, were not particularly interested in historiography. Among the few historical works found in Ismaili literature, the writings of Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn b. al-Ḥasan, who led the Musta'li Ṭayyibī Ismailis of Yaman as their 19th *dā'ī mutlaq* for four decades until his death in 872/1468, occupy a central position. This learned *dā'ī*, who had access to numerous Ismaili sources, in fact, produced several histories including the *'Uyūn al-akhbār*, the only comprehensive history of the Ismaili Imams, from the earliest time until the late Fatimid period when Ismailism had already split into its major Nizārī and Musta'li factions.

The seventh and final volume of Idrīs' *'Uyūn al-akhbār* is published here for the first time in a critical edition prepared meticulously by Professor Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid who has already contributed immensely to Islamic and Egyptian historiography, accompanied by an English summary. This volume carries the

narrative from the time of the Fatimid Caliph-Imam al-Mustanşir bi'llāh (427–487/1036–1094), and the revival of the Ismaili *da'wa* in Yaman under the Şulayḥids, to the reigns of al-Mustanşir's next two successors on the Fatimid throne, al-Musta'li and al-Āmir, and the origins of the Ṭayyibī *da'wa* in Yaman under the patronage of the Şulayḥid queen al-Malika al-Sayyida al-Ḥurra (d. 532/1138). This is, indeed, the most important Ismaili source on the early history of the Musta'li Ṭayyibī *da'wa* in Yaman reflecting that community's indigenous tradition. As such, Idrīs' account of the origins of Ṭayyibī Ismailism are in conflict with the version propounded by the Ḥāfiẓīs, the other Musta'li Ismaili community who recognized as their Imams the later Fatimid caliphs, after al-Āmir (d. 524/1130), but did not long survive the collapse of the Fatimid state in 567/1171. Similarly, the author's account of the Nizārī-Musta'li succession dispute reflects the official view of the Ṭayyibīs, the only surviving Musta'li community in Yaman and elsewhere – a view that is rejected by the Nizārī Ismaili tradition regarding al-Mustanşir's succession dispute. The Nizārīs, as it is well-known, uphold the rights of Nizār (d. 488/1095), al-Mustanşir's eldest son and original heir-designate who was set aside forcefully in favour of his younger half-brother al-Musta'li (d. 495/1101) by the all-powerful Fatimid *wazīr* al-Afḍal.

The wide range of research projects encouraged and undertaken by The Institute of Ismaili Studies serve to reflect pluralism in Islam as well as a diversity of interpretations within Shi'ism, including not only Ismailism of different branches but Twelver (Ithnā'asharī) and Zaydī Shi'ism as well. It is in this academic spirit, and in order to further progress in Ismaili studies, that the present important text is offered here in the Ismailis Texts and Translations Series. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid for his critical edition of this important text, and to Paul E. Walker and Maurice A. Pomerantz for their contribution to the English parts.

Farhad Daftary

Introduction

Until quite recently the legacy of the Fatimid Ismailis was considered an unknown aspect of the Islamic past.* The reason is that this was a secret legacy to which no one had access except those approved by the agents (*dā'īs*) of the Ismaili mission (*da'wa*) for their loyal adherence. This, in part, is what led to the absence of attention to it during the later Islamic periods and at the beginning of the modern era. For the same reason the greater portion of this legacy has remained inaccessible and therefore unknown in modern Islamic studies.

The libraries of the Ismaili *da'wa* in Yaman, western India, Iran and Central Asia continued, nevertheless, to preserve a substantial number of manuscripts belonging to the Fatimid Ismaili legacy. These were, however, available for study only to followers of the *da'wa*. The seclusion of this legacy goes back to the period of the Imam al-Mustanşir bi'llāh, the Fatimid Caliph-Imam, in the middle of the 5th/11th century at a time when the chief *dā'ī al-du'āt* al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 470/1078) first observed the increasing influence in Egypt of the *wazīns* and the diminution of the Imam's power. He began to fear that, if the Fatimid state in Egypt should cease to exist, the situation would lead eventually to the eradication of the written works of the *da'wa*. He therefore thought it essential to transmit the learning of the *da'wa* to a place

that would ensure its preservation. At that time, Yaman was the only region that was considered safe due to the political power held by the Şulayḥids, who ruled there on behalf of the Fatimids. Thus, when the chief justice of Yaman, Lamak b. Mālīk, was sent to the court of al-Mustanşir bi'llāh in Cairo in the year 454/1062 by the Şulayḥid sultan and *dā'ī* of Yaman, 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī, at the head of a delegation to request from the Imam permission 'regarding a pilgrimage to Mecca and continuing on after that to pay a visit to the Most Noble Presence,' one result of his mission was the transfer to Yaman of the Ismaili literary legacy that had been written over the centuries in the Maghrib, Egypt, Iran and other places.

Following the death of the Imam al-Mustanşir bi'llāh in 487/1094, a dispute broke out over the succession between his sons Nizār and Abu'l-Qāsim Aḥmad (al-Musta'li bi'llāh). This struggle, which ended in the victory of al-Musta'li, was the cause of a major schism in the Fatimid Ismaili *da'wa*, leading to its division into two rival branches, the Musta'lis and the Nizārīs. Whereas the *da'wa* in Egypt and Yaman upheld al-Musta'li's claims to the imamate as the successor to al-Mustanşir bi'llāh, the Ismailis of Iran founded an independent *da'wa* in the name of Nizār.

The Musta'lis were further divided soon after 524/1130 when their Caliph-Imam al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh was murdered and the Yamani Ismailis refused to accept as his successor to the imamate al-Ḥafīz 'Abd al-Majīd, who became the Fatimid caliph. The *da'wa* in Yaman continued now on behalf of al-Āmir's son al-Ṭayyib, who was thought to be in hiding. The Şulayḥid queen and ruler of Yaman at this time was al-Malika al-Sayyida al-Ḥurra, who separated the leaderships of the *da'wa* and the Şulayḥid state, and appointed the *dā'ī* al-Dhu'ayb b. Mūsā al-Wādī'ī as the first *dā'ī mutlaq* both to lead the *da'wa* on behalf of the hidden Imam and to assume custody of the literature of the (earlier) Fatimid Ismaili *da'wa*. Subsequent political upheavals brought about the end of al-Malika al-Sayyida's rule, followed by her death in the year 532/1138 and the concealment of the Fatimid literary legacy by the *dā'ī mutlaq*s of succeeding generations. In the 9th/15th century the *dā'ī* Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn rose to the position of the 19th *dā'ī*

muṭlaq of the Ṭayyibī *da'wa* in Yaman and thereby gained access to these sources, which he began to use in composing a variety of important historical works.

In the years that followed the Ottoman conquest of Yaman in 944/1537 and the division of the Ṭayyibī *da'wa* into the Dā'udīs, who moved to India, and the Sulaymānīs, who remained in Yaman, this literature ultimately found its way to Gujarat on India's west coast. The Ṭayyibīs of Yaman also retained a large share of this legacy, especially in the regions of Dhū Jibla and Ḥarāz, until the time when the Zaydī Imam al-Mutawakkil Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad Ḥamīd al-Dīn (1322–1367/1904–1948) seized it and subsequently deposited it in several boxes in the library of the Great Mosque of Ṣan'ā'. In 1964, the Egyptian Minister of Culture despatched to Yaman researchers specialized in documents and manuscripts. They were able to photograph fifty-eight important books from this collection and these copies are now in the Egyptian Library in Cairo. Among them there are volumes of the '*Uyūn al-akhbār*' by Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn, the *Maṣābiḥ fi ithbāt al-imāma* by Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, the *Rasā'il Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī* (13 *risālas*) and the *Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyya* of al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrazī.¹ These manuscripts are distinguished by their antiquity and authenticity, in contrast to Ismaili manuscripts of Indian provenance which are relatively modern, having all been copied only in the last two centuries. It would appear that the originals from which these latter manuscripts were copied are kept in the library of the present Dā'ūdī *dā'ī* himself who generally prohibits access to them. The majority of these writings are attributable to the literature of the Musta'li-Ṭayyibī *da'wa*.

The distinction of having first explored the thought and doctrines of the Ismailis based on their own writings belongs to the Russian orientalist Wladimir Ivanow (1886–1970), who emigrated in the early 1920s – following the Bolshevik Revolution – to India where he became acquainted with the Imam of the Nizārī Ismailis, Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh, Aga Khan III (1885–1957). The latter facilitated his access to Ismaili manuscripts and other writings that had been preserved by his Nizārī followers in India and elsewhere. Drawing upon these manuscripts, Ivanow authored many

pioneering studies that have continued to serve as the foundation for Ismaili studies. He edited several primary Ismaili texts of such importance that they drew the attention of a number of Western researchers, including Bernard Lewis, Marius Canard, Henry Corbin and others, who applied modern methods of scholarship to their analysis and offered new theories that opened the door to Ismaili studies even wider.

At the same time, by virtue of the efforts of a group of scholars belonging to the Musta'li branch of Ismailism who had begun their activities in India but subsequently went to continue their studies in the West, a significant number of primary Ismaili works appeared, and the understanding of how to prepare them for scholarly publication expanded as a result. Among these scholars, mention may be made of Ḥusayn Fayḍ Allāh al-Hamdānī (Husayn Hamdani), Āṣaf 'Alī Aṣghar Fayḍī (A.A.A. Fyzee), and later 'Abbās al-Hamdānī (Abbas Hamdani) and Ismā'īl Qurbān Ḥusayn Pūnāwālā (Ismail K. Poonawala). Belonging to the Musta'li branch of Ismailism, this group of scholars based their studies on the large number of manuscripts of the Ismaili *da'wa* that they had inherited from their families. Their work helped to give a picture of greater precision to the true reality of the history and beliefs of the Ismailis.

The pioneer of this group of scholars was Husayn Hamdani (1901–1962), who published an article in 1933 in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* entitled 'Some Unknown Ismā'īlī Authors and their Works,' on the basis of the collection of Ismaili manuscripts that his family had preserved in Surat, India (at the Muhammad Hamdani Library, al-Khizāna al-Muḥammadiyya al-Hamdāniyya, established by his grandfather Muḥammad 'Alī al-Ya'burī al-Hamdānī). His son Abbas Hamdani, professor at the University of Wisconsin in the United States, has in recent years made important contributions to the study of the Ṭayyibī Ismaili *da'wa* in particular and to the *Rasā'il* of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā, again based on the same primary sources. In addition, Husayn Hamdani gave to the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London a copy of the work known as *al-Sijillāt al-Mustanṣiriyya*, one of the most important and reliable sources for

the period of Ṣulayḥid rule in Yaman. His article on this text was published in 1934 in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* entitled 'The Letters of al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh.' Subsequently, in 1954, 'Abd al-Mun'īm Mājīd published the whole work in Cairo.

In 1932, the School of Oriental and African Studies acquired an important collection of Ismaili manuscripts that had been in the possession of an Ismaili Bohra gentleman in India who had died three years earlier. A number of his books later passed into the hands of one of his sons who appears to have embraced Christianity. Since the latter was no longer attached to the Ismaili creed, he offered these manuscripts for sale outside of India. A.S. Tritton gave a brief review of them in an article entitled 'Notes on Some Ismaili Manuscripts,' published in 1933, again in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*.

In the same year W. Ivanow published the first, book-length bibliographical work on Ismaili texts. His *A Guide to Ismaili Literature* (London, 1933),² was based on a manuscript of the *Fihrist al-kutub wa'l-rasā'il wa li-man hiya min al-'ulamā' wa'l-a'imma wa'l-ḥudūd wa'l-afāḍil* by Ismā'il b. 'Abd al-Rasūl al-Ājīnī al-Majdū', an Ismaili scholar from the 12th/18th century³ – this was also one of the manuscripts in the Muhammad Hamdani Library. Three decades later, Ivanow produced a new enlarged edition of this work entitled *Ismaili Literature: A Bibliographical Survey* (Tehran, 1963). In 1977 Ismail K. Poonawala compiled a more comprehensive *Biobibliography of Ismā'īlī Literature* (Malibu, California) with short biographies of the authors. He also wrote an important article concerning 'Ismā'īlī Sources for the History of South-West Arabia' that appeared in *Sources for the History of Arabia* (Riyad, 1979, vol. 1, pp. 151–59). In the same volume, Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid also contributed an article on Fatimid sources for the southern Arabian peninsula entitled 'Dirāsāt naqdiyya li-ba'ḍ maṣādir junūb ḡharb al-jazīra al-'arabiyya fi'l-'aṣr al-Fāṭimi,' pp. 245–52).

Meanwhile descriptive catalogues have appeared for several collections of Ismaili manuscripts, including Mu'izz Goriawala, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Fyzee Collection of Ismaili Manuscripts* (Bombay, 1965); Asaf A.A. Fyzee, 'A Collection of Fatimid Manuscripts,'

in N.N. Gidwani, ed., *Comparative Librarianship: Essays in Honour of Professor D.N. Marshall* (Delhi, 1973), pp. 209–20; Adam Gacek, *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of The Institute of Ismaili Studies* (2 vols, London, 1984–85); and Delia Cortese, *Ismaili and Other Arabic Manuscripts: A Descriptive Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Library of The Institute of Ismaili Studies* (London, 2000). The Institute of Ismaili Studies will shortly be publishing another catalogue of Arabic Ismaili manuscripts acquired recently from the family of the eminent Ismaili Bohra scholar, the late Dr Zāhid ‘Alī (1888–1958).

The content of the book

The seventh volume of the *‘Uyūn al-akhbār* by the *dā‘ī* Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn b. al-Ḥasan al-Anf is considered a unique source for the investigation of the religious character of the Ṣulayḥid dynasty in Yaman. The position of the author as the 19th *dā‘ī muṭlaq* of the Ṭayyibī *da‘wa* in Yaman and the extraordinary Ismaili sources and documents that he had access to make his book the principal source for the study of the Yamani *da‘wa*.

The volume commences with the appearance of the *dā‘ī* ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī on behalf of the Ismaili *da‘wa* in the Yamani peninsula during the reign of the Fatimid Caliph-Imam al-Mustanṣir bi’llāh. An account of all this takes up more than half of the book. The author then presents a summary history covering the periods of al-Musta‘lī bi’llāh (487–495/1094–1101), as well as al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh (495–524/1101–1130), whom he considers as the last of the Fatimid Imams in Egypt. The Yamani *da‘wa* regarded the last four caliphs of the Fatimid state in Egypt (al-Ḥāfīz, al-Zāfir, al-Fā’iz and al-Āḍid) as having no legitimate claim to the imamate as they had expropriated it from the rightful Imam, the hidden al-Ṭayyib, son of al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh.

The section on the reign of the Imam al-Mustanṣir bi’llāh details at some length the role of the chief *dā‘ī* al-Mu’ayyad fi’l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī in Iraq and Syria and his support for the movement of the Turkish commander Abu’l-Ḥārith Arslān al-Basāsīrī in Baghdad. Here the author relied on the autobiography of al-Mu’ayyad and on his subsequent official appointment to the rank of *dā‘ī al-*

du'āt in Egypt in 450/1058 which he held for a period of twenty years. He alludes likewise – from an unknown Egyptian source – to the administrative crises and political upheaval that swept Cairo, the seat of the Fatimid dynasty, in the middle of the 5th/11th century at the hands of Turkish troops led by Nāṣir al-Dawla b. Ḥamdān. As a result, al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh was compelled in 466/1074 to seek the aid of the governor of Acre, the Armenian general Badr al-Jamālī, in order to restore order in the state. The author explains how, following the death of al-Mu'ayyad in 470/1078, this military commander became the head of the Fatimid *da'wa* and thus in charge of religious affairs of the state. In 472/1079 additions to his titles made him 'Guarantor of the Judges of the Muslims and Guide of the *dā'īs* of the Believers' (*kāfil quḍāt al-muslimīn wa hādī du'āt al-mu'minīn*).

The author also treats in this volume some particulars of the dispute over the succession to the Imam al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh, which is considered to have been the greatest internal crisis to afflict the Fatimid dynasty. The death of al-Mustanṣir was the end of the period of the unified Ismaili *da'wa*, splitting the movement into two competing branches, the Musta'lis and the Nizārīs. This division had severe and long-lasting repercussions that were to affect the future of Ismailism as a whole.

In the second half of his book, the author turns to the reigns of al-Musta'li bi'llāh and his son al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh, and then the interval that followed, that is, up to the time 'Abd al-Majīd al-Ḥāfīz, a cousin of al-Āmir, claimed the imamate for himself. This section also contains a detailed history of the Ṣulayḥids, who were the successors of 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī – the founder of the dynasty and state – and the history of the Fatimid *da'wa* in Yaman during the same period.

The final section of this work is devoted to the hidden Imam al-Ṭayyib b. al-Āmir and the letter (*siḡill*) that his father sent to al-Malika al-Sayyida in Yaman providing legal confirmation of his son's succession after him. Ṭayyibī Ismailis believe that the disappearance of al-Ṭayyib signalled the commencement of another 'era of concealment' (*dawr al-satr*) in their religious history (similar to that which preceded the establishment of the Fatimid state

in the Maghrib by the Imam ‘Abd Allāh al-Mahdī in 297/910). The volume concludes with a rapid review of developments that transpired in Egypt when Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf b. Ayyūb seized the reigns of power in the year 567/1171 and put an end to the Fatimid state.

Throughout his narrative, the author shifts repeatedly between Egypt and Yaman, even interrupting the chain of events in the history of the Ṣulayḥids in order to throw light on important episodes in Cairo. One needs to bear in mind that the events he describes concerning Egypt are not, in most cases, dated with precision and that dates and the sequence of events are often mixed up, even on occasion giving, for purely doctrinal reasons, an account that differs from what the Egyptian sources otherwise agree on.⁴

Despite all this, the seventh volume of the *‘Uyūn al-akhbār* remains a basic source for the history of the Fatimid *da‘wa* in Yaman during the time of the Ṣulayḥids – for its account of the wars, victories and defeats of the dynasty, what it contains in the way of biographical information about the most important persons of both the state and the *da‘wa*, and the poems of varying lengths that were occasioned by the events cited.

The distinctive quality of this work that gives its first part exceptional importance for the history of the Ismaili *da‘wa*, despite the author’s separation by three to four centuries from the events he describes, is that it draws its information from sources that were contemporary with the Ṣulayḥids. The author copied into it examples of a number of official documents that no historian outside of those in the religious circles associated with the Ṭayyibī *da‘wa* in Yaman, could possibly have had access to. Furthermore, in his capacity as head of the Ṭayyibī *da‘wa*, Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn was heir to the material that tradition had preserved in its own library. Throughout the pages of this volume he reproduces the entire texts of many decrees and letters that the Fatimid Caliph-Imams (al-Mustaṣfir bi’llāh, al-Musta’lī bi’llāh and al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Al-lāh) had despatched to the *da‘wa*. There are also letters from female relatives of the caliphs (their mothers and wives) to the *da‘wa* and the Ṣulayḥids in Yaman. The work in addition contains

the text of the *Sijill* by means of which al-Mustanşir appointed al-Muʿayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī to the position of chief *dāʿī*. Finally, there are several sermons delivered by al-ʿAmir in celebration of the Fiṭra and Naḥr feasts, whose importance can be traced to Ismaili veneration of the Fatimid caliph as their Imam and religious leader, more so than as a political ruler or head of a vast empire.

The first scholar to indicate the importance of this volume of the *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* was Husayn Hamdani, who had access to a complete copy preserved in the library of his family. Hamdani relied on this copy for his book *al-Ṣulayḥiyyūn wa'l-ḥaraka al-Fāṭimiyya fi'l-Yaman* (Cairo, 1955) where he included in the appendices (2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9; pp. 301–307, 319–330) a number of historical *sijills* taken from the same volume. The copy of volume seven held in the Muhammad Hamdani Library has been made available to a number of other researchers as well. Among those who have benefited from it in the course of their own studies were Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn, ʿAbd al-Munʿim Mājid, Ismail K. Poonawala and Ayman Fuʿād Sayyid.

The author of the book, the *dāʿī* Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn

Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlī b. al-Walīd al-Anf was the 19th in the line of the Ṭayyibī Ismaili *dāʿī mutlaq*s in the second ‘period of concealment’ that followed the death of their Caliph-Imam al-ʿAmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh and the concealment of his son al-Ṭayyib. His lineage went back to the family of al-Walīd al-Qurashī who led the Ṭayyibī *daʿwa* in Yaman for more than three centuries.⁵ No information about him is found in the biographical works but the Indian *dāʿī* Quṭb al-Dīn Sulaymānjī Burhānpūrī, who died in 1241/1826, included in his *Muntazaʿ al-akhbār*, a biography that he based on Idrīs’s own *Nuzhat al-afkār* and *Rawḍat al-akhbār*. Burhānpūrī does not mention a date of birth for Idrīs but Ismail K. Poonawala places it in the year 794/1392 in the citadel of Shibām on the Jibal Ḥarāz in Yaman.⁶ We know nothing about his life prior to his assumption of the leadership of the Yamani *daʿwa* as successor to his uncle ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlī b. al-Walīd (821–832/1418–1428), the 18th *dāʿī mutlaq*, following his death on the third of Ṣafar 832/13 November 1428.⁷

Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn took over the leadership of the Ṭayyibī *da‘wa* at a critical time during which Yaman witnessed severe warfare between various parties. Idrīs, who was allied with the Ṭāhirid sultan, clashed with the Imam of the Zaydīs in northern Yaman and seized from him a substantial number of fortresses and citadels. In the year 840/1436 the region of Jibal Ḥarāz and its dependencies was suddenly hit by a plague that claimed the lives of a great many supporters of the *da‘wa*, among them ‘Izz al-Dīn Ma‘add b. al-dā‘ī ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī b. al-Walīd, and his uncle Muḥammad b. ‘Alī. The deaths of most of these people occurred in the month of Ṣafar of that year.⁸ As a result Idrīs was forced to depart for Shibām from which he did not return to Ḥarāz, the most important stronghold of the Ismaili *da‘wa* in Yaman, until Sha‘bān 853/November 1449. He himself reports, ‘The adherents of the *da‘wa* were extremely pleased at my having arrived; they were like someone whose father has been absent and then returns after a long journey.’⁹ Idrīs also played an important role in matters that concerned the Ṭayyibī *da‘wa* in India and he paved the way for the eventual transfer of its centre from Yaman to India.¹⁰

At the moment when Idrīs sensed the end of his life approaching, he designated his son al-Ḥasan to succeed him as head of the *da‘wa*, and provided him support in the person of the son of his uncle ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan Fakhr al-Dīn. Idrīs himself died on 19 Dhu’l-Qa‘da in the year 872/10 June, 1468 over forty years after he had assumed the leadership of the Ṭayyibī *da‘wa* in Yaman.¹¹

The works of Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn

Despite the relatively late period in which he lived, Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn is considered the greatest of the Ismaili historians. His eminence in this respect derives from his position as *dā‘ī muṭlaq* of the Ṭayyibīs in Yaman, which allowed him access to the Ismaili literary heritage that was preserved there, the greater share of which had been transferred from Egypt to Yaman in the middle years of the 5th/11th century during the journey home of al-Qāḍī Lamak b. Mālik al-Ḥammādī. Subsequently, after the concealment of al-Ṭayyib b. al-Āmir in the year 524/1130, it was preserved by

the *da'wa* organization in Yaman of which Idrīs became head in 832/1428. Idrīs composed a large number of historical and doctrinal works that draw on these same primary sources which otherwise would have not come down to us.

Quṭb al-Dīn Burhānpūrī cites several of the works of Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn, which may be classified as follows: (a) historical works about the Ismaili *da'wa* generally, including the history of Yaman and its Ṭayyibī *da'wa* – in this category Idrīs must be considered, on account of his being a native of Yaman itself, the best authority on this subject; and (b) doctrinal works and those written in refutation of the adherents of other religious communities.

Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn wrote three major historical works and a number of doctrinal treatises:

1. *'Uyūn al-akhbār wa funūn al-āthār fī dhikr al-nabī al-muṣṭafā al-mukhtār wa waṣīyyuhu 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib qātil al-kuffār wa āluhumā al-a'imma al-aṭhār* 'alayhim ṣalawāt Allāh al-'azīz al-ghaffār ('Sources of Information and Varieties of Evidence that Speak of the Chosen and Preferred Prophet, and of His Heir 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, the Slayer of Heretics, and of Their Family, the Most Pious Imams, on all of them the blessings of God, the All-powerful, the Most-forgiving'). This is the most important book to chronicle the Ismaili *da'wa* from its inception up to the second half of the 6th/12th century. It consists of seven volumes, each of them labelled a 'seventh' (*sub'*), a term possessing special meaning for the Ismailis who were known also by the term 'Sevens' (al-Sab'iyya) in reference to their seventh Imam Muḥammad b. Ismā'il b. Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. These 'sevenths' (i.e., parts or volumes) comprise the following:

- I The outstanding virtues of the Apostle (God bless him and keep him) and his life, and the marriage of Fāṭima and 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.
- II&III The life of the Imam 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, the battles of the Camel, Ṣiffīn and al-Nahrawān, until his murder.
- IV An account of the Imams from al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib to the end of the era of the hidden Imams, and the commencement of the open manifestation of 'Abd Allāh al-Mahdī.

- v The advent of the Fatimid state in the Maghrib and an account of the first three Fatimid Caliph-Imams al-Mahdī, al-Qā'im and al-Manṣūr.
- vi An account of the Imams beginning with al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh and the transference of the Fatimid caliphate to Egypt, followed by the reigns of the Imams al-'Azīz bi'llāh, al-Ḥākīm bi-Amr Allāh, al-Zāhir li-I'zāz Dīn Allāh and the beginning of the reign of al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh.
- vii A treatment in rich detail of considerable quantity of the completion of the reign of al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh and the setting up of the Ṣulayḥid state in Yaman, the schism that followed the death of al-Mustanṣir, the reigns of al-Musta'li bi'llāh and al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh, and commencement of the Ṭayyibī *da'wa* in Yaman. It also contains important details about the various *dā'is* of Yaman.

It appears likely that Idrīs began writing the *'Uyūn al-akhbār* after he finished his book *Zahr al-ma'ānī* in the year 838/1434.

Because of the importance of this book for the history of the Ismaili *da'wa*, it is the duty of each student in the Jāmi'a al-Sayfiyya (Sayfi College) in Surat, India, to transcribe a copy of it that conforms completely to the original primary handcopy, against which the professors of the college check it and make corrections. The library of the college retains all of these copies.

The late Syrian Nizārī scholar Muṣṭafā Ghālib (1923–1981) edited volumes IV, V and VI – the fourth was published in Beirut in 1973, the fifth and sixth in 1975 and 1978. The Tunisian scholar Farḥat al-Dashrāwī (F. Dachraoui) edited a portion of the fifth volume under the title *Ta'rīkh al-dawla al-Fāṭimiyya bi'l-Maghrib (al-Mahdī – al-Qā'im – al-Manṣūr – thawrat Abī Yazīd)* (Tūnis, 1979). Later, another Tunisian scholar Muḥammad al-Ya'lāwī published the fifth and part of the sixth volumes under the title *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā' al-Fāṭimiyyīn bi'l-Maghrib* (Beirut, 1985).

2. *Nuzhat al-afkār wa rawḍat al-akhbār fī dhikr man qāma bi'l-Yaman min al-mulūk al-kibār wa'l-du'āt al-akhyār* ('The Pleasure of the Thoughts and the Garden of the Information that Speak of those Great Kings and Most Excellent Missionaries who were active in

the Yaman'). This is the only book that elucidates a clear picture of the history of the Ismaili *da'wa* in Yaman without interruption from the days of the *dā'i* Ibn Ḥawshab Maṣṣūr al-Yaman in the second half of the 3rd/9th century until the time of Idrīs himself, but most especially from the fall of the Ṣulayḥid state in 532/1138 until 853/1449. The author gives particular importance to the Ṭayyibī *da'wa* in India and relations between the Ṭayyibī and Nizārī communities in Yaman and India.

The book comes in two volumes, the first of which treats the *da'wa* in Yaman from the time of Ibn Ḥawshab up to the appointment of al-Dhu'ayb b. Mūsā al-Wādī'ī as the first *dā'i muṭlaq* in the 'period of concealment'. He follows that with brief biographies of a number of *dā'īs* in succession, similar in form to those that occur in the *Mudhakkirāt*, as well as notices of some of their prominent contemporaries. It ends with the mention of the *dā'i muṭlaq* 'Abd Allāh b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ḥātīm, who was the author's grandfather. The second volume is entirely devoted to the biography of this *dā'i* and that of his successor, both of whom were the immediate forebears of the author.

There is a manuscript of the *Nuzhat al-afkār* in two volumes at the Muhammad Hamdani Library, and another of 178 folios, copied in the 13th/19th century, in the library of the Great Mosque in Ṣan'ā' (a microfilm of which is also preserved at the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, no. 2253). The Institute of Ismaili Studies also has a copy of this work. Samer F. Traboulsi is currently preparing a critical edition of it based on these manuscript sources.

3. *Rawḍat al-akhbār wa nuzhat al-asmār fī ḥawādith al-Yaman al-kibār wa'l-ḥuṣūn wa'l-amṣār* ('A Garden of Information and Diverting Conversations concerning Major Events in the Yaman and its Fortresses and Chief Cities'). This work resembles a continuation of the previous *Nuzhat al-afkār* in so far as it begins with the events of the year 854/1450 and goes on from there to account for what happened up to the year 870/1466. It is an important source for the history of the Ṭāhirids, who ruled Yaman after the Rasūlids, because Idrīs was himself allied with them. The book is also an important source for its account of Idrīs's own life and the role he played as head of the Ṭayyibī *da'wa* in Yaman. A unique copy of

the *Rawḍat al-akhbār* written in the year 991/1583 is preserved in the library of the University of London, no. 1972. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Akwā‘ al-Ḥawālī has prepared an edition of this work (Ṣan‘ā’, 1995).

Husayn Hamdani, the first person to indicate the importance of the historical works of Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn and to use them, observed that his books are not free of occasional partiality and prejudice, of either excessive devotion or fierce polemics, resulting not infrequently in distortions of what really happened and the omission of certain events. This indeed appears to be the case when the works of Idrīs are compared with other historical sources.¹² Furthermore, Idrīs does not make a clear distinction between Ismaili sources and others that are quite hostile to them.

4. *Zahr al-ma‘ānī fi tawḥīd al-mubdi‘ al-ḥaqq subḥānahu wa ma‘rifat al-kamālayn al-awwal wa l-thānī wa ḥuṣūl ‘ālam al-jism wa irtiqā’uhu ilā al-‘ālam al-rūḥānī fi l-ḥaqā’iq* (‘The Flower of the Meanings in the Declaration of the Absolute Unity of the True Originator, hallowed high is He, and the knowledge of the two perfections, the first and the second, and the advent of the physical world and its ascent in reality to the spiritual world’). This is the most important doctrinal work of Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn, being a comprehensive treatise of Ismaili esoteric doctrines and their elaboration in the Ṭayyibī tradition. The *Zahr al-ma‘ānī* has been edited by Muṣṭafā Ghālīb (Beirut, 1991).

5. *Risālat al-bayān limā wajaba min ma‘rifat al-ṣalāt fi naṣf shahr rajab al-aṣabb* (‘A Treatise Explaining what should be known in regard to the Prayer in the middle of the month of Rajab, the Pouring [time of mercy]’). According to Burhānpūrī, ‘He [Idrīs] explains in it the interpretation of the three months, Rajab, Sha‘bān and Ramaḍān, and the meaning of the prayer of the mother of Dā’ūd [Fāṭima, the daughter of ‘Abd Allāh who was a Ḥasanid ‘Alid] and the meaning of the fast. In them he uncovered truths and the knowledge of details that no one before him had revealed.’¹³ He provides an interpretation in this treatise of the prayer that the Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq initiated as a way of instruction for Fāṭima bint ‘Abd Allāh. It was composed of eight *rak‘as* accompanied by

a group of Qur'ānic verses and invocations to be recited after the performance of the prayer.

6. *Risāla fi'l-radd 'alā al-zandīq al-musammā bi'l-Jamal*, also known as *al-Risāla al-mawsūma bi-muwaddīhat al-talbīs wa dāhīdat al-tadlīs fi'l-radd 'alā ba'd al-mu'atṭilīn al-musammā bi'l-Jamal* ('A Treatise Refuting the Heretic called the Jamal; also known as The Treatise marked by a clear explanation of the deceit and a refutation of the fraud in reply against one of the atheists called the Jamal'). The person in question here is unknown. Burhānpūrī describes him as a member of a group of insolent people who tried to discredit Islam and the Muslims. He goes on to say that Idrīs affirms in this work everything contained in the Qur'ān and in the noble law by the way of explanation, definitive argument and brilliant proofs, and he demonstrates in it the excellence of Islam and the Muslims.¹⁴

7. *al-Risāla al-mawsūma bi-mudhīdat al-buhtān wa muwadḍīhat al-ḥaqq fi ṣawm shahr Ramaḍān* ('A Treatise marked by the refutation of the untruth and the explanation of the truth concerning the fast of the month of Ramaḍān'). Idrīs composed this treatise when a group of dissidents in India deviated from the teachings of the *da'wa*. In the matter of the fast of Ramaḍān they insisted on the sighting of the new moon, in opposition to the Fatimid practice of determining the beginning of the month by astronomical calculation. The *dā'ī* ordered this work to be despatched to the province (*jazīra*) of India.

8. *Risāla fi'l-radd 'alā 'ālim min 'ulamā' al-Zaydiyya wa hadama mā banāhu fi kitābihi min al-muḥāl* ('A Treatise Refuting a certain scholar among the Zaydīs and the destruction of the absurdities he tried to establish in his book').

9. *Risāla zubdat al-sarā'ir*, also known as *Ḍiyā' al-baṣā'ir wa zubdat al-sarā'ir* ('A Treatise on the Essence of the Secrets; also known as The Light of Insights and the Essence of the Secrets').

10. *Īdāḥ al-i'lām wa ibānat al-ḥujja fi kamāl 'iddat al-ṣiyām fi anna al-ṣiyām bi'l-ḥisāb lā bi'l-ru'ya wa anna shahrahu thalāthūna yawman lā*

yanquṣu min ‘iddatihi abadan (‘Making the Information Clear and Establishing the Proof with respect to the completion of the number of fasting days, that the fasting is by calculation and not by visual sighting, and that the month for it consists of thirty days and is never less than this number’). A principal source of this treatise is the *Majālis* of al-Mu’ayyad fi’l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī.

11. *Dīwān shī‘r* (‘A Collection of Poetry’): Burhānpūrī characterizes this work as a great achievement in which symbols, allusions, insights and intimations are clearly explained.¹⁵

Those works of Idrīs not mentioned by Burhānpūrī are as follows:

12. *Hidāyat al-tālibīn wa iqāmat al-ḥujja fi ṛdāḥ al-ḥaqq al-mubīn fi jawāb al-māriqīn min ahl al-Hind* (‘Guidance for the Students and the Establishment of the Proof that sets out clearly the manifest truth that answers the Heretics among the People of India’).

13. *Risāla fi hilāl al-ṣiyām* (‘A Treatise on the Moon of Fasting’).

14. *Ta’wīl amthāl al-Qur’ān* (‘Interpretation of the Parables in the Qur’ān’).

The sources of the ‘*Uyūn al-akhbār*

The principal source for this important period in the history of Yaman, which comprises the history of the Ṣulayḥids and other ruling dynasties that were contemporary to them (the Najāḥids, the Banū Mahdī, the Zuray‘ids), is the ‘History of Yaman,’ *Ta’rīkh al-Yaman*, also called *al-Mufīd fi akhbār Ṣan‘ā’ wa Zabīd*, by the jurist and poet ‘Umāra al-Yamanī, whose full name was Najm al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ‘Umāra b. Abi’l-Ḥasan al-Ḥakamī. He died in Cairo in 569/1174.¹⁶ This book was the foundation for all later attempts to write the history of these dynasties, so much so that the later Yamani historians, among them al-Khazrajī, Ibn al-Dayba‘ and Yahyā b. al-Ḥusayn, added but little to what ‘Umāra had recorded.

‘Umāra began writing his history in 563/1167 – that is, after he had resided in Egypt for thirteen years – in response to a request from al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil ‘Abd al-Raḥīm b. ‘Alī al-Baysānī, the

head of the Fatimid chancery at the time of al-‘Āḍid¹⁷ (555–567/1160–1171) who subsequently became one of the closest advisors to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf b. Ayyūb who brought about the end of the Fatimid state. ‘Umāra was linked by strong ties to numerous members of the Zuray‘id family who themselves directed the Ḥāfiẓī (Majīdī) Musta‘lī *da‘wa* in Yaman on behalf of the last four Fatimid caliphs in Egypt.

Although ‘Umāra was killed in an attempt to restore Fatimid rule in Egypt in 569/1174, and there is a well known poem of his in which he laments the demise of the Fatimid regime, it appears quite probable that he remained Sunni in his religious affiliation. Al-Qalqashandī says that ‘Umāra did not follow the beliefs of the Shī‘a but was a Shāfi‘ī jurispudent who came to Fatimid Egypt with a message from al-Qāsim b. Hāshim b. Fulayta, the *amīr* of Mecca, to al-Fā‘iz (549–555/1154–1160), one of their caliphs, in the year 550/1155 during the wazirate of al-Ṣāliḥ Ṭalā‘ī b. Ruzzīk.¹⁸

‘Umāra copied into his history many reports from a work now unfortunately lost, *al-Mufīd fī ta’rīkh Zabīd* by Jayyāsh b. Najāḥ who died in 498/1105.¹⁹ Al-Janadī and Abū Makhrama ascribe the loss of this book to the fact that it ‘exposed the lineages of many persons who had boasted of being Arab whereas his account of them denied that fact. As a result they went to great lengths to get rid of the book; every time they heard of a copy they bought it and destroyed it. For that reason copies became increasingly scarce.’²⁰

Even though the *Ta’rīkh al-Yaman* of ‘Umāra was an essential source for Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn in the seventh volume of the *‘Uyūn al-akhbār*, the two authors offer different dates for the same events and in fact are in accord on only five. It is, however, possible to establish the correct dates for these events on the basis of the *Sijillāt al-Mustanṣiriyya* – a copious assortment of unique documents that concern this very period – which are decisive and not open to doubt.

‘Umāra, and those who copied from him, place the date on which ‘Alī al-Ṣulayḥī revolted in Jabal Masār as 429/1037. Idrīs employed the same date at the beginning of his seventh volume

but corrected himself some pages later, mentioning that the true date was 439/1047. This is in agreement with the date given by Muḥammad b. Mālik b. Abi'l-Qabā'il al-Ḥammādī, a legal expert in Yaman and one of the Sunni religious scholars of the 5th/11th century, in the *Kashf asrār al-Bāṭiniyya*,²¹ a work of extreme importance for the history of the Fatimid Ṣulayḥid movement in Yaman. Al-Ḥammādī was contemporary to the movement and had embraced its doctrine with which he had therefore become familiar. Later, he renounced the Ṣulayḥids and wrote this treatise in which he reveals the sources of their doctrines and their faults. 'Umāra assigns the date on which 'Alī al-Ṣulayḥī wrote for the first time to the Imam al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh requesting his permission to conquer Yaman and to proclaim the *da'wa* on his behalf as the year 453/1061, while Idrīs places it in 439/1047. However, the existence of correspondence that was exchanged between Yaman and Cairo in the *Sijillāt al-Mustanṣiriyya* prior to 453/1061 makes the date that Idrīs offers far more likely.

The two books differ likewise over the dates of the killing of 'Alī al-Ṣulayḥī and the death of his son al-Mukarram Aḥmad. While 'Umāra and those who follow him in this maintain that 'Alī al-Ṣulayḥī died in 473/1080, Idrīs mentions that he was killed in 459/1066. Similarly, 'Umāra puts the death of al-Mukarram Aḥmad in 484/1091, but Idrīs affirms the correct date as 477/1084. The *Sijillāt al-Mustanṣiriyya*, on which Idrīs based his information, leaves no doubt that the deaths of these two men fell in the years 459/1066 and 477/1084, respectively.

In a similar way 'Umāra does not mention the *amīr* al-Mukarram al-Ṣughayyir 'Abd al-Mustanṣir, son of al-Mukarram Aḥmad and his wife al-Malika al-Sayyida, who, following the death of his father in 477/1084, succeeded to the position of command under the supervision of his mother.

The final chapter of 'Umāra's *Ta'rīkh al-Yaman*, which has the subtitle 'Chapter about those who directed the Fatimid *da'wa* in Yaman,' and which contains the text of the *sijill* that al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh sent to al-Malika al-Sayyida to inform her of the birth of his son al-Ṭayyib, earlier aroused the suspicions of H.C. Kay – the first person to edit the work – who pointed out that it contains

many omissions and distortions that render more than a few meanings in various passages unintelligible or obscure. Kay also observed that the way in which the *sijill* of al-ʿAmir has been incorporated into the text indicates that it was introduced peremptorily.²² Samuel Stern rejected most of the material in this chapter, considering it to be an interpolation by a later Ṭayyibī author, even though he regarded the first part of it, which provides a list of the Zurayʿid *dāʿīs*, as authentic.²³ Michael Bates, after a thorough study of this chapter, concluded that it is the work of a Ṭayyibī author and proved this by the fact that the *dāʿī* Lamak b. Mālīk and his son Yaḥyā, who are mentioned in the chapter, were active before the Yamanī *daʿwa* became independent from Fatimid Egypt. The two men are completely ignored by ʿUmāra al-Yamanī; there is no citation of them at all in his ‘history,’ nor does he mention the rest of the *dāʿīs* whose names appear in this chapter – which suggests that it is an interpolation by a Ṭayyibī author with the aim of advancing the cause of those who first founded this sect. It is clear that the author of this final chapter was tied in one way or another to the Ṭayyibī movement and knew a great deal about its official history.²⁴ Samer Traboulsi adds that a careful reading of the chapter shows us that it had in fact more than one author. The section that commences with the phrase ‘it was transferred from the authority of al-Ḥāfiẓ to the family of Zurayʿ’ is a second addition by a Zurayʿid author who inserted the names of the Zurayʿid *dāʿīs* at the end of the book.²⁵

Idrīs also used a text from another book by ʿUmāra al-Yamanī, his *Unmudhaj mulūk al-Yaman*, which is concerned with the poet and *dāʿī* al-Sulṭān al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 533/1138). This may well be the only passage of the otherwise lost book to survive and it shows us clearly that ʿUmāra’s interests were broader than those reflected in the *Taʾrīkh al-Yaman*. Idrīs had not managed to acquire his own copy of this particular book when he concluded the section, but he borrowed from it. He says there, ‘The book of his that I mention is not with me and therefore I am relating what it says.’²⁶

The *Sīrat al-dāʿī al-Mukarram al-Ṣulayḥī*, a work by an unknown author (which Idrīs cites using the words, ‘The author of the *Sīrat* [*al-dāʿī*] *al-Malīk al-Mukarram* reports...’), is the only source that

presents us with a complete review of the entire sequence of the life of al-Mukarram and al-Malika al-Sayyida in plentiful detail. The information provided in this *Sira* changes completely our perception of the negative role of al-Mukarram as conveyed by the *Tārīkh al-Yaman* of ʿUmāra and the later Yamani Sunni sources. It applies in particular to the role al-Mukarram played in subduing the rebels who controlled Yaman in the aftermath of the killing of his father, ʿAlī al-Sulayhī.²⁷

The *dāʿī al-duʿāt* al-Muʿayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī is considered the spiritual father of the Yamani *daʿwa* by virtue of his direct association with al-Qāḍī Lamak b. Mālik al-Ḥammādī, the *dāʿī* of Yaman in the time of al-Mukarram Aḥmad and al-Malika al-Sayyida, who lived with him in the Dār al-ʿIlm in Cairo for five years (454–459 AH). It was from al-Muʿayyad that Lamak obtained the advice that defined the future policy and activities of the *daʿwa* in Yaman. Al-Muʿayyad was also the last exponent of the Fatimid *daʿwa* whose influence extended outside of Egypt and especially to Yaman, as can be seen in the *Sijillāt al-Mustanṣiriyya* (*sijills* no. 55 and 61). He left a legacy for the Yamani *daʿwa* that, by good fortune, it has preserved for us in the form of his writings. In fact the scholars of Yaman are more likely to speak of al-Muʿayyad, to borrow from his works or to rely on the strength of his arguments than any other author. They cite him in their books with the words, 'Our lord al-Muʿayyad.'²⁸ For this reason it seems quite natural for the *Sīrat al-Muʿayyad fi'l-Dīn* to occupy a principal place among Idrīs's sources for the period of the Imam al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh. He took from it lengthy passages, particularly for the leading role al-Muʿayyad played as the intermediary between the Fatimids and the Turkish general Abu'l-Ḥārith Arslān al-Basāsīrī with the aim of announcing the *khutba* in the name of the Fatimids from the *minbars* of Baghdad.

In most places, Idrīs is in agreement with the text of the book *Tuhfat al-qulūb wa tartīb al-ḥudūd fi'l-jazīra al-Yamaniyya* by the *dāʿī* Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī, who died in 596/1199. This is a work on the philosophy of the Ismailis divided into 28 chapters of which chapters 21 and 22 offer a detailed account of the Ṭayyibī *dāʿīs* and the condition of the *daʿwa* in Yaman following the death

of al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh. Nevertheless, Idrīs does not, in the one instance in which he depended on it, mention the title of this book. A lengthy passage devoted to the mission of al-Qāḍī Lamak to Cairo, his meetings with al-Muʾayyad and the Imam al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh, and his subsequent role in the *daʿwa* after his return to Yaman, is based on information borrowed from the two chapters mentioned above.²⁹

Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn did not depend entirely on Yamani and Ismaili works but also employed other historical sources such as the *Wafayāt al-aʿyān* by the *qāḍī* Ibn Khallikān who died in 681/1282, and the *Akḥbār al-duwal al-munqaṭiʿa* by Ibn Zāfir al-Azdī who died in 612/1215. This is particularly the case when he discusses the transfer of the governing authority in Egypt and the rise of the military wazirs, Badr al-Jamālī and his son al-Afḍal, to the height of power.³⁰ In regard to reports about the civil war and administrative chaos that overwhelmed Egypt in the middle of the 5th/11th century, Idrīs drew, for his account, on a richly detailed Egyptian source that he does not specify. Although in several places Idrīs cites the Egyptian historian and topographer al-Qāḍī Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Salāma al-Quḍāʿī, who died in 454/1062,³¹ without specifying the title of his book, he definitely cannot be the source Idrīs used here because he died some ten years prior to the events of the civil war.

However, the most important of the primary sources on which Idrīs relied, and one that gives his book particular historical value, is the collection of the *Sijillāt al-Mustanṣiriyya*, which supplies us with a wealth of information about the Yamani region (*jazīra*) of the Ismaili *daʿwa* and its relationship with the Fatimid imamate in Egypt. It consists of 66 *sijills* that were issued by the chancery of the Imam al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh directed to his *dāʿīs* in Yaman and written over 44 years between 445/1053 and 489/1096.³² These *sijills* are considered documents of major importance in confirming a number of dates, in the light they cast on contemporary events both in Yaman and Egypt, and also for the understanding of the relationship between the head of the Fatimid *daʿwa* in Cairo and one of the regional *jazīras* of that *daʿwa*. Likewise, they clarify for us what influence central Yaman enjoyed under the rule of

the Ṣulayḥids and give the impression that the leadership of the *da'wa* in Cairo simply accepted the Ṣulayḥid viewpoint on matters concerning the two *da'was* in India and 'Umān.³³ However, it is essential for us to recognize that most exchanges of this kind occurred orally between emissaries who were continually shuttling between the court of the Fatimid Imam and the Ṣulayḥid court. The *sijills* provide mainly a confirmation, through official documents, of such communiqués.

Indeed, these *sijills* throw essential light on the later period of al-Mustanṣir's long reign (427–487/1036–1094). We find information in them of the greatest value about internal events in Egypt and at the Fatimid court, and occasionally for those outside of Egypt such as the activities of the Zīrid ruler al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs on behalf of the Abbasids in the Maghrib. The *sijills* also allude to changes that befell the organization of the *da'wa* in Egypt following the death of the chief *dā'ī* al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī in 470/1078 and after the Imam al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh had sought the help of the Armenian commander, Badr al-Jamālī – who from the year 472/1080 on was regarded as the 'Guarantor of the Judges of the Muslims and Director of the *Dā'īs* of the Believers,' to the point that the Imam 'prefers that there should be no affair of religion or the world of which he [Badr] is not in charge.'³⁴

Idrīs included in the seventh volume of the '*Uyūn al-akhbār* the complete texts of *sijills* 5, 14, 35, 38 and 50 (no. 7 appears in an incomplete form). He also added to these a significant number of *sijills* that did not find their way into the *Sijillāt al-Mustanṣiriyya*. This fact indicates that Idrīs had in his possession a number of original documents that have not come down to us.

Description of the manuscripts

In general, copies of Ismaili manuscripts have not found a place in national libraries because they remained concealed in private libraries. The known manuscripts are found mainly in the principal centres of the Ismaili communities in Yaman, Syria, India, Pakistan, Iran and Central Asia. The largest collection of such manuscripts today is found in the library of The Institute of Ismaili Studies in London. The majority of the manuscripts derived

from the Fatimid legacy are relatively modern, having been copied by Indian copyists over the last two centuries, although undoubtedly from older sources. The present *dā'irī mutlaq* of the Dā'ūdī Ṭayyibī Bohra community, Sayyidnā Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn, is in possession of many manuscripts held at a library in Surat, which are unfortunately not easily accessible for scholarly research. This library is said to hold an autographed copy produced by Idrīs himself of the fourth volume of his *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*, which states in the final colophon that the writing of it was completed on the 22nd of Rabīʿ al-Awwal 842 AH/1438.³⁵

Those who have published parts of Idrīs's *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* – that is, the fourth, fifth and sixth volumes – have relied on various examples of these modern copies. When I began preparations for editing the seventh volume and the concluding section of the book, I employed in the first attempt a copy in the Muhammad Hamdani Library, of which I found a photo enlargement in the library of my father – God's mercy be on him – that had been given to him by Husayn Hamdani, along with a similar copy of the *Nuzhat al-afkār* by Idrīs, the original of which was also preserved in his library. Both works are in the same handwriting. The copyist completed the *Nuzhat al-afkār* in Shawwāl of 1290/December 1873. The 'seventh' of the *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* was written after 1310/1892, in clear Indian *naskhī* script, occupying 128 folios with 21 lines per page. I have indicated it by the symbol 'h' (*hā*).

After I had completed the first phase of the edition, I discovered that the Institute of Arab Manuscripts in Cairo possesses in its collection an uncatalogued microfilm (under no. 643 History) of an old copy of an original that contains the last three volumes of the work and which states at the end:

This ends the seventh 'seventh' of the book *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* in the hand of the poor slave who confesses to weakness and shortcomings, Ḥasan b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥamza b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Nuʿmān. May God nurture him, be pleased with his friends, forgive him and his parents; He is the All-forgiving, Most Merciful. The completion of the copying of this blessed book occurred on Thursday at noon the second of Rabīʿ al-Ākhir in the year 923 [April 1517]. This book

was copied from a copy that is in the hand of the author – may God bestow on him His intercession and gather us among His party as a right of Muhammad and his family – in the fortress of the guarded citadel [Ḥarāz in Yaman] may God protect it by the longevity of its master, as a right of Muhammad and his blessed family...

This manuscript, having been transcribed from one in the handwriting of the author himself, is therefore the oldest known copy of this highly important work. The catalogue of the Institute of Arab Manuscripts and its indices do not record the source from which this copy was filmed. A card attached to the outside of the binding of the book has written on it ‘one of the special books.’ The manuscript comprises 125 folios, 25 lines per page. In the pages that have poetry there is less distance between the lines, and occasionally some verses are written in the margin along the length of the page using a less formal script. The beginnings of some sections of the manuscript are written in red ink but all with a practised hand. Some words have been corrected or words that were missing have been added during the process of collating the copy with the original from which it was taken. Similarly, explanations for some difficult words and the identification of cities or tribes appear in the margin, added there in a separate fine hand at a later period. I have indicated this copy with the word *al-aṣl*.

Subsequently, I discovered that the Bohra scholar Bad‘at Sayfiyya Quṭb al-Dīn (Bazat Safiyah Qutbuddin) had produced an edition of a portion of the seventh volume of this book for her Master’s thesis presented to the American University in Cairo on the subject: *A Section from the ‘Uyūn al-Akhbār wa Funūn al-Āthār (volume VII) of Dā‘ī Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn (d. 872/1468) and the Succession Controversy following the Death of the Fatimid Caliph al-Mustanshir: The Claims of the Musta‘liyya and the Nizāriyya*. The edited section comprises the period of the reigns of al-Musta‘lī and al-Āmir, and the beginning of the Ṭayyibī *da‘wa* (corresponding to pages 187–310 of the present edition). Qutbuddin’s study is profound and her edition of this section of the seventh volume is quite good. When she learned from me of my resolve to produce a complete edition of the whole seventh volume, she informed me that she

was not planning to publish her thesis, and graciously provided me with a complete copy, which was of great benefit during my own work on the second section of this volume. To her I owe most sincere thanks.

Qutbuddin had relied on three manuscript copies of this volume: a microfilm of a manuscript in the library of the Sayfiyya University in Karachi, Pakistan, that has no date and is in a modern hand; a manuscript held in the library of Sayyidnā Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn in Bombay, also not dated but older than the previous one; and a manuscript in the personal library of Sayyidnā Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn in Bombay, dating to 923/1517. It was copied by Ḥasan b. ‘Abd Allāh b Ḥamza b. Aḥmad b. ‘Abd Allāh, and is without doubt the original of the photocopy that is held by the Institute of Arab Manuscripts, although we have no idea of how it got there. Subsequently, I made a collation of the work on the basis of this new copy, which for the purposes of the edition is to be regarded as the original.

Thus, in editing this volume, I relied on two manuscripts: one in the library of the *dā‘ī* Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn in Bombay and the other from the Muhammad Hamdani Library. In view of the fact that I was unable to examine the originals of either of these two manuscripts, I cannot offer a codicological description of them.

My methods in producing the edited text

In addition to the two major manuscript sources mentioned above, I sought help from those sources that Idrīs himself had used and are still extant, most particularly the *Sīrat al-Mu‘ayyad fī ‘l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī*, the *Sijillāt al-Mustanṣiriyya* and the *Ta‘rīkh al-Yaman*, also called *al-Mufīd fī akhbār Ṣan‘ā’ wa Zabīd*, by ‘Umāra al-Yamanī. I regarded the texts of these works as an indirect basis on which I could amend the text, and I examined carefully the differences that occur in wording and phrasing. I have indicated in the notes clear departures between the texts of these sources and what the author of the *‘Uyūn al-akhbār* quotes from them. Words and phrases required by the flow of the text have been inserted between square brackets [] and their sources mentioned in the notes.

I have made a further distinction between the text of the author and his quotations of the words of the Fatimid Imams, either from *sijills* or from *khutbas*, by having these *sijills* set in a smaller type so as to distinguish them from the words of the author.

Since the author provided no explanatory subtitles, I permitted myself to add main and subsidiary headings in order to make the various subtopics clearer. All such subheadings encountered here are not original to the work but were inserted to render the rich material in it more useful and to facilitate comprehension of the text and its context, especially in regard to the names of individuals, places, countries and specific technical terms.

I have divided the notes to the book into two categories: one for comparative materials and variant readings, and the other for interpretation, explanations and notes. In so far as I have compared any of the texts that Idrīs quotes with the sources that have come down to us, I note the places where these quotations occur. I have identified individuals and point out where biographical notices for them are to be found. I have also taken care to explain many of the associated factors for events that are related in the work, particularly those that happened in Egypt. For this I depended on trustworthy sources and on modern studies done by scholars who specialize in Yamani and Fatimid Ismaili studies, among whom are Husayn Hamdani, Abbas Hamdani, Samuel M. Stern, Farhad Daftary, Ismail K. Poonawala, as well as my own works.

I have created several topical indices in the book for individuals, places and countries, tribes and groups, Qur'ānic verses, poetic rhymes (*qawāfi*), technical terms, authors, poets, narrators and books mentioned in the text. In those cases where I was unable to locate a place or region of Yaman mentioned in the book, I have listed them in a separate index designated for them, being guided in this by what my father – God's mercy be on him – did at the end of his edition of the work *Ṭabaqāt fuqahā' al-Yaman* by Ibn Samura al-Ja'dī.

At the conclusion of this work, I wish to extend my sincerest thanks and gratitude to a dear friend, Dr Farhad Daftary, one of the most learned contemporaries on the history of the Ismailis,

who graciously accepted my edition of the final volume of the *‘Uyūn al-akhbār* by Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn for publication in the Ismaili Texts and Translations Series of The Institute of Ismaili Studies, which is under his general editorship. Thanks are similarly due to Professor Paul E. Walker of the University of Chicago, another of the small number of specialists in Ismaili history and thought, who took on the task of producing an English version of my introduction. I am also indebted to Maurice A. Pomerantz of the same university for his English summary of the Arabic text.

Finally, here is the seventh volume of the *‘Uyūn al-akhbār* by the *dā‘ī* Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn. After mastering the text, annotating it, collating it with its sources and producing indices for it, I am hopeful that it will find its place among scholars, students and libraries concerned with Islamic studies in general and Ismaili studies in particular. My success is only through God: *‘In Him I put my trust; verily in Him let all those who trust put their trust.’*

Ayman Fu’ād Sayyid
Cairo

Notes

* This Introduction is for the most part a translation of Dr Ayman Fu’ād Sayyid’s own introduction to the Arabic section of this work. It has been modified in places, however, with a few changes and some additions, to make it more accessible and therefore more useful for English readers who are unable to consult the Arabic version.

1. Ayman Fu’ād Sayyid, *Maṣādir ta’rīkh al-Yaman fi’l-‘aṣr al-Islāmī* (Cairo, 1974), pp. 428–29.

2. See P. Kraus, ‘La Bibliographie ismaélienne de W. Ivanow,’ *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, 6 (1932), pp. 483–90.

3. ‘Alī Naqī Manzavī edited and published this important work in Tehran in 1966.

4. For example, *‘Uyūn al-akhbār*, vol. 7, pp. 193–94, 251, 257. All page references in this volume refer to the present critical Arabic edition.

5. For the biography and writings of Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn, refer to Quṭb al-Dīn Burhānpūrī, *Muntaza‘ al-akhbār fī akhbār al-du‘āt al-akhyār*, partial ed. S.F. Traboulsi (Beirut, 1999), pp. 166–75; Ismā‘īl b. ‘Abd al-Rasūl al-Majdū‘, *Fihrist al-kutub wa’l-rasā’il*, ed. ‘A.N. Munzavī (Tehran, 1966),

pp. 73–77, 150–51; W. Ivanow, *Ismaili Literature: A Bibliographical Survey* (Tehran, 1963), pp. 77–82; C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* (2nd ed., Leiden, 1943–1949), vol. 2, pp. 239, 250; Muṣṭafā Ghālib, *A'lam al-Ismā'īliyya* (Beirut, 1964), pp. 137–39; A. Fu'ād Sayyid, *Maṣādir ta'riḫ al-Yaman fi'l-ʿaṣr al-Islāmī*, pp. 180–83; al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām* (4th ed.), vol. 1, p. 279; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifin*, vol. 2, p. 216; 'Alī Ḥusnā al-Kharbūṭlī, *Imād al-Dīn Idrīs al-dā'ī wa'l-mu'arriḫ al-Fāṭimī (794–872h)* (Cairo, 1973); I.K. Poonawala, *Biobibliography of Ismā'īlī Literature* (Malibu, Calif., 1977), pp. 169–75; Poonawala, 'Idrīs b. al-Ḥasan,' *EL2, Supplement*, p. 407; F. Daftary, *The Ismā'īlis: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 258–59, 290–91.

6. Poonawala, 'Idrīs b. al-Ḥasan,' p. 407.

7. Burhānpūrī, *Muntaza' al-akhbār*, p. 166.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 170–72.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 172.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 173–74.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

12. Ḥusayn al-Hamdānī, *al-Ṣulayḥiyyūn wa'l-ḥaraka al-Fāṭimiyya fi'l-Yaman* (Cairo, 1955), p. 5.

13. Burhānpūrī, *Muntaza' al-akhbār*, pp. 167–68.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 168–69.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

16. See A. Fu'ād Sayyid, *Maṣādir ta'riḫ al-Yaman*, pp. 108–10. The *History of Yaman* was first edited and translated into English by H.C. Kay in *Yaman: Its Early Mediaeval History* (London, 1892; repr. 1968). Kay relied on a unique manuscript written after the year 1258/1842. He added to the Arabic text a biography and richly detailed notes in English. Ḥasan Sulaymān Maḥmūd re-edited the work based on the edition of Kay but with his notes translated into Arabic. In 1967 al-Qādī Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Akwā' published in Cairo a new edition of the book based on a manuscript dated 723/1323 that included accounts of Yamani poets and literary figures – a section that was missing from Kay's edition – which al-Imād al-Iṣfahānī al-Kātib, who died in 597/1200, had inserted in his work *Kharīdat al-qaṣr wa jarīdat al-ʿaṣr*, at the point where he discussed the poets of the Ḥijāz and Yaman, published by Shukrī Fayṣal (Damascus, 1964).

17. 'Umāra al-Yamanī, *Ta'riḫ al-Yaman*, vol. 1 (35).

18. Al-Qalqashandī Aḥmad b. 'Alī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā fi ṣinā'at al-inshā*, ed. M. 'A. Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1331–38/1913–20), vol. 3, p. 528.

19. See A. Fu'ād Sayyid, *Maṣādir ta'riḫ al-Yaman*, p. 97.

20. Al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk fī ṭabaqāt al-‘ulamā’ wa’l-mulūk*, vol. 1, p. 252; Abū Makhrama, *Ta’rīkh thaghīr ‘Adan*, vol. 2, p. 47.

21. ‘Izzat al-‘Aṭṭār al-Ḥusaynī published this work on the basis of a private copy and another held by the Library of Sūhāg (no. 104, history) along with an introduction by the learned Shaykh Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī in 1939. He published it again in 1959 together with the book *al-Tabṣīr fī’l-dīn* by al-Isfarayīnī in a single volume.

22. Kay, *Yaman: Its Early Mediaeval History*, pp. 134–37.

23. S.M. Stern, ‘The Succession to the Fatimid Imam al-Āmir, the Claims of the later Fatimids to the Imamate, and the Rise of Ṭayyibī Ismailism,’ *Oriens*, 4 (1951), pp. 214–19.

24. M.L. Bates, ‘The Chapter on the Fāṭimid *Dā’īs* in Yemen in the *Ta’rīkh* of ‘Umāra al-Ḥakamī (d. 569/1174): An Interpolation,’ in A.M. Abdallah et al., ed., *Studies in the History of Arabia, I: Sources for the History of Arabia* (Riyadh, 1979), vol. 2, pp. 53–67.

25. S.F. Traboulsi, ‘Gender, Authority and Legitimacy in Medieval Yemen: The Case of Arwa bint Ahmad’ (M.A. thesis, American University of Beirut, 1998), p. 25.

26. Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn, ‘*Uyūn al-akhbār*, vol. 7, p. 298; *Nuzhat al-afkār*, vol. 1, 13v. There is in the Yale University Library (Yale 1312 [L-727]) a book by an unknown author that bears the title *Unmūdaj al-Yaman*. It is defective at the end but terminates with the events of 712/1313. I have not seen it but perhaps it is this book of ‘Umāra, or possibly some copyists attributed it to him, or it is a continuation of his work by some other historian.

27. Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn, ‘*Uyūn al-akhbār*, vol. 7, pp. 122–27. Shaykh Muḥammad Shākir, a Bohra scholar, has informed me that he has located in one of the libraries of Yaman a copy of the *Sīrat al-Mukarram* and that he is preparing a study of it which he will present to the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.

28. A. Fu’ād Sayyid, *Ta’rīkh al-madhāhib al-dīniyya fī bilād al-Yaman* (Cairo, 1988), pp. 136–38.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 113; A. Hamdani, ‘The Dā’ī Ḥātim Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmīdī (d. 596 H./1199 A.D.) and his Book *Tuḥfat al-Qulūb*,’ *Oriens*, 23–24 (1970–71), pp. 258–300.

30. Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn, ‘*Uyūn al-akhbār*, vol. 7, pp. 178, 235–36.

31. On this see A. Fu’ād Sayyid, ‘L’Evolution de la composition du genre des khitat en Egypte Musulmane,’ *Annales Islamologiques*, 33 (1999), p. 65.

32. H.F. Hamdani, ‘The Letters of al-Mustanṣir bi’llah,’ *Bulletin of the*

School of Oriental (and African) Studies, 7 (1934), pp. 307–24; the Arabic text was published by ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Mājid in Cairo in 1954.

33. Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn, *‘Uyūn al-akhbār*, vol. 7, pp. 232–33; *al-Sijillāt al-Mustanṣiriyya*, *sijills* nos. 41 and 50; A. Fu‘ād Sayyid, *Ta’rīkh al-madhāhib al-dīniyya*, pp. 165–69.

34. Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn, *‘Uyūn al-akhbār*, vol. 7, p. 183.

35. Ivanow, *Ismaili Literature*, p. 78.

‘Uyūn al-akhbār

Volume 7

English Summary of the Arabic Text

The Reign of al-Mustanşir bi'llāh

The Ismaili *da'wa* in Yaman from Ibn Ḥawshab to 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī (p. 3)

The *dā'ī* Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī¹ began the open proclamation of the *da'wa* of the Imam al-Mustanşir bi'llāh in Yaman in the year 439/1047–1048. Idrīs provides a list of the Ismaili missionaries (*du'āt*) in Yaman who preceded 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī, beginning with the *dā'ī* Manşūr al-Yaman Abu'l-Qāsim al-Ḥasan b. Faraḥ b. Ḥawshab.² He states that all of these *dā'īs* attained their positions through the designation of the preceding *dā'ī*.

1. Abu'l-Qāsim al-Ḥasan b. Faraḥ b. Ḥawshab
2. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās
3. Ja'far b. Aḥmad b. 'Abbās
4. Yūsuf b. Mūsā b. Abī Ṭufayl
5. 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Bishr
6. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. al-'Abbās
7. Hārūn b. Muḥammad b. Ruḥaym
8. Yūsuf b. Aḥmad b. al-Ashajj
9. Sulaymān b. 'Āmir al-Zawāḥī

The early career of 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī (p. 5)

'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī was born in the village of Qatar, in the region of Ḥarāz. His father, Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī, was a *qāḍī* in the region. Idrīs describes the initiation of al-Şulayḥī in Ismaili doctrines by the *dā'ī* Sulaymān b. 'Āmir al-Zawāḥī who appointed al-Şulayḥī as his successor to the leadership of the Yamani *da'wa*.

Upon the death of Sulaymān b. 'Āmir al-Zawāḥī, al-Şulayḥī assumes the leadership of the *da'wa* in the name of the Fatimid Caliph al-Zāhir li-I'zāz Dīn Allāh, the Imam of that time.³ Al-Şulayḥī proceeds to gather support for the Ismaili *da'wa* and discusses with the Ismailis of Yaman and in Mecca during the pilgrimage the open proclamation of the *da'wa*. He informs the

Imam al-Mustanşir⁴ of his intentions to declare the Ismaili *da'wa* openly.

During the period in which al-Şulayḥī waits for permission of the Imam, Ibn Abī Jahwar, the ruler of Lahāb in Ḥarāz, threatens the Ismailis living in that region.⁵ Al-Şulayḥī has a dream in which the Imam al-Mustanşir gives him the order to openly declare the Fatimid *da'wa* in Yaman and build a fortress on the top of Jabal Masār. Al-Mustanşir also prophesies that al-Şulayḥī will control the entire province of Yaman.

Al-Şulayḥī then proceeds to send messengers to the members of his *da'wa* organization among the neighbouring tribes in order to gather equipment and money. He predicts that they will take control of the lands of the unjust.

In addition to those responding to al-Şulayḥī from the tribal groups in the region of Ḥarāz, tribes from all over Yaman come to support him. Idrīs reports that on the night of 14 Jumādā I 439/6 November 1047, a total of three hundred men from the regions of Banū Yām, Banū Hamdān and Banū Ḥimyar joined al-Şulayḥī. He then orders forty men from the tribe of Hawzan (*ahl Hawzan*) to travel by night to Jabal Masār.

‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī conquers Jabal Masār (p. 10)

After the evening prayer on 14 Jumādā 439/6 November 1047, al-Şulayḥī marches to Jabal Masār. Upon reaching the mountain, the forces opposing al-Şulayḥī realize that the tribe of Hawzan are now in control of the mountain's summit. When the local forces hear the drums of the tribe of Hawzan they flee in fright. Idrīs comments that al-Şulayḥī succeeded in capturing Jabal Masār without engaging in battle. The following morning, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī begins construction of a fortress on the peak of Jabal Masār.

The letter of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad to the people of Ḥarāz (p. 11)

Al-Şulayḥī sends a letter to the region of Ḥarāz. Idrīs includes the text of this letter. After a long introduction in which he praises the Prophet Muḥammad, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and the Imams, al-

Ṣulayḥī states that his intention in establishing a fortress on Jabal Masār does not result from his desire for worldly gain, but rather it is in accordance with the command of Allāh. He affirms that he will treat the people of Ḥarāz with mercy and rule them justly.

Messengers return from the Imam al-Mustaṣṣir to al-Ṣulayḥī. He is pleased to learn that al-Mustaṣṣir has ordered the open proclamation of the *da'wa* in Yaman and has prophesied victory.

Meanwhile local forces begin to react against the *da'wa*. The Zaydī *sharīf*, Ja'far b. Abi'l-Qāsim al-Sharīf al-Rassī⁶ lays siege to the fortress of al-Ahkrūj where al-Ḥusayn b. al-Muhalhal, a companion of 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī, and his followers from the tribe of Hamdān and Banū Shihāb are located. A local ruler, Ja'far b. 'Abbās, leads a contingent from the regions of Ḥarāz and Karar and attempts to lay siege to Jabal Masār. After a long battle in which the *dā'i* al-Ṣulayḥī plays a crucial role, Ja'far b. 'Abbās is killed and his forces retreat into the mountains. Idrīs estimates the number killed in the battle was one thousand. The forces of al-Ṣulayḥī reach the fortress of al-Ahkrūj and expel the Zaydī *sharīf* from the stronghold. Idrīs reports that this final battle occurs during Ramaḍān 439/ February-March 1048.

Al-Ṣulayḥī writes a flattering letter to Najāh,⁷ the ruler of Zabīd and the Tihāma, to allay his fears of a Ṣulayḥid advance into the Tihāma.⁸ Idrīs states at this point that the entire region of Ḥarāz was in obeisance to al-Ṣulayḥī except for Ibn Jahwar in Lahāb. Ṣulayḥid forces under the command of al-Ṣulayḥī and 'Āmir b. Sulaymān al-Zawāḥī, along with tribal reinforcements from the Ḥijāz led by Aḥmad b. al-Muẓaffar al-Ṣulayḥī, take control of Jabal Shibām.

The battle of al-Ṣulayḥī with Ibn Jahwar (p. 14)

Al-Ṣulayḥī turns his attention to the opposition of Ibn Jahwar in Ḥarāz, who is the ruler of Lahāb and has taken captive several important companions of al-Ṣulayḥī including the *qāḍī* Lamak b. Mālik al-Ḥammādī. These men are released and return to the fortress on Jabal Masār. The armies of the Ṣulayḥids and Ibn Jahwar continue to battle one another.

Fearing the power of al-Ṣulayḥī, a local leader, Abū Nūr, calls

upon Najāḥ, the ruler of Zabīd in the Tihāma. Abū Nūr attempts to set the forces of Najāḥ against the *dā'ī* al-Ṣulayḥī, but he is unsuccessful. Finally the Ṣulayḥīd army takes control of the region of Lahāb by force and Ibn Jahwar surrenders himself to the *dā'ī*.

The instructions of al-Ṣulayḥī to the people of Ḥarāz (p. 15)

Al-Ṣulayḥī orders that the people of Ḥarāz gather at 'Abrī Da'ās. After blessings and prayers on the Prophet and the *ahl al-bayt*, he urges his audience to be pious, abstain from sin, and to perform the ritual prayer and observe the religious commandments. He states that he is not like the sultans of the world, but rather he is fighting in the true path of God. Al-Ṣulayḥī says that he will treat the inhabitants with justice as exemplified in the lives of the Imams (*sīrat al-a'imma wa af'āluhum*). Finally he informs the people of Ḥarāz of the letter from the Imam al-Mustanṣir that prophesies his conquest over the entire province of Yaman.

Jabal Masār becomes the centre of the Ismaili *da'wa* in Yaman. Supporters from the Ḥijāz and elsewhere arrive at the fortress. They settle on Jabal Masār and in the surrounding areas of Ḥarāz, providing greater military strength for the armies of al-Ṣulayḥī.

Al-Ṣulayḥī leads a circle of initiates in religious instruction. He orders the *dā'īs* under his command to come to his residence, where he instructs them privately in Ismaili doctrines and enjoins them to pray openly among the other believers. He summons a particular group that has been negligent in religion (*al-tafrīt fi amr al-dīn*), so that he can instruct them in piety.

After the conquest of the fortresses of Ḥaḍūr, al-Ṣulayḥī sends a message to the ruler of Ṣan'ā', Yaḥyā b. Ibrāhīm al-Ṣaḥārī. Upon the latter's death, he despatches several of his companions to Ṣan'ā' to offer his condolences to al-Ṣaḥārī's son, Abū Ḥāshid b. Yaḥyā.

Idrīs reports that during this period, the ruler of Ṣa'da, Abu'l-Faṭḥ b. al-Ḥusayn consults Najāḥ, the ruler of the Tihāma, concerning the conquest of Ṣan'ā'. Abu'l-Faṭḥ at this point declares himself the Zaydī Imam with the title of al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh. Idrīs then accuses Abu'l-Faṭḥ of wantonly cursing al-Ṣulayḥī. He states that this habit was common amongst the Zaydī Shi'īs who

curse others and invent stories concerning events which they have not actually witnessed.

The battle of Zarā'ib (p. 19)

Idrīs states that as a result of the letters that Abu'l-Faṭḥ b. al-Ḥusayn wrote to Najāḥ, the relationship between Najāḥ and al-Ṣulayḥī deteriorated. The situation leads to Najāḥ sending troops against the Ṣulayḥids. To defend against this attack al-Ṣulayḥī moves his army to Ḍa'fān in the plains adjacent to the Tihāma. Several small battles ensue. After this attack, al-Ṣulayḥī then conducts a raid into the Tihāma that results in the death of a great number of Najāḥ's men. Idrīs here quotes the history of 'Umāra al-Yamanī,⁹ which states that in the year 450/1058, twenty thousand African troops battled the forces of al-Ṣulayḥī, who numbered two thousand and seven hundred men, at the location of al-Zarā'ib in the Tihāma. After the battle the army of Najāḥ is reduced to under one thousand who flee the forces of al-Ṣulayḥī.

The death of Najāḥ (p. 20)

Idrīs reports that when Najāḥ died in al-Kadrā' in the year 452/1060–1061, al-Ṣulayḥī's power and importance were then recognized throughout Yaman. Al-Ṣulayḥī takes control of the city of al-Mahjam in the Tihāma. The two sons of Najāḥ, Sa'īd and Jayyāsh, flee. Al-Ṣulayḥī then proceeds to conquer the city of Zabīd. Many tribal leaders pledge to obey him. Al-Ṣulayḥī then returns in triumph to Jabal Masār and advances toward Ṣan'ā', where the ruler Abū Ḥāshid b. Yaḥyā surrenders his rule over the city to him.

Al-Ṣulayḥī conquers southern Yaman (p. 21)

Al-Ṣulayḥī returns to Zabīd and launches a campaign to conquer Southern Yaman. He first takes Jabal Ṣabr by force and then captures the city of al-Janad, followed by 'Adan (Aden). By the year 455/1063 al-Ṣulayḥī has conquered all of Yaman and makes Ṣan'ā' his capital.

Idrīs claims that al-Ṣulayḥī did not deny any group its right to

practise its own religion. Al-Şulayhī exalts the learned who follow his *madhhab* and those who follow the teachings of other schools as well. He is not opposed except by certain traditionalist scholars, described as ‘arrogant anthropomorphists’ who delude the masses (*al-awbāsh*) with their speech.

Al-Şulayhī receives the following titles from the Imam al-Mustanşir: ‘Most Sublime Sultan, Singular King, Grand *Amīr*, Support of the Caliphate, Crown of the State, Possessor of the Two Glories, Sword of the Imam, Victorious in Religion, the Order of the Believers ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayhī’ (*al-sultān al-ajall al-malik al-awḥad amīr al-umarā’ ‘umdat al-khilāfa tāj al-dawla Dhu’l-majdāyn sayf al-imam al-muzaffar fi’l-dīn niẓām al-mu’minīn ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayhī*). Idrīs declares that al-Şulayhī controlled all of Yaman, except for Mecca, which was under the rule of the *sharīf* of Banū al-Ḥasan. He notes that the *ashrāf* (nobles) of Mecca¹⁰ at this time gave allegiance to the Fatimids and mentioned the name of the Caliph al-Mustanşir in the *khutba*.

Al-Şulayhī and the *ashrāf* of Mecca (p. 23)

Idrīs reports that foreign interlopers (*dukhālā’*) began to cause tensions between the *sharīf* Shukr b. Abi’l-Futūḥ al-Ḥasanī and the Sultān al-Şulayhī. The *sharīf* shows his anger by sending threatening poems to al-Şulayhī. These threats are answered in a long poem by the poet ‘Amr b. Yaḥyā b. Abi’l-Ghārāt al-Haythamī. When the *sharīf* continues to insult al-Şulayhī, the latter loses his patience and writes to the Imam al-Mustanşir requesting permission to remove the *sharīf* from Mecca. Al-Mustanşir replies ordering him to be patient and warns him against the shedding of blood inside the shrine of Mecca. Al-Şulayhī heeds the words of al-Mustanşir and endures the *sharīf*’s insults.

Al-Şulayhī performs the *hajj* (p. 26)

With the affairs of Yaman in order and the greater part of the territory under his control, al-Şulayhī leaves Şan‘ā’ to perform the *hajj* in 454/1062. He leaves his wife Asmā’ bint Shihāb and his son al-A‘azz Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayhī in

control of Şan'ā'. He also appoints his brother-in-law, the *amīr* As'ad b. Shihāb, as the ruler of the city of Zabīd.

Accompanied by a large group of tribal rulers, al-Şulayhī performs the *hajj* and the payment of alms (*şadaqāt*). During his stay in Mecca, al-Şulayhī observes the feuds between the *sharīf* Shukr b. Abi'l-Futūh al-Ḥasanī and his cousins in the Ḥijāz in the sacred enclosure of Mecca (*al-ḥaram*). He attempts unsuccessfully to reconcile the two parties, but recognizes that in the present situation there is nothing that he can do to remedy the matter. When he returns from Mecca, al-Şulayhī writes a letter to al-MustaŒsir informing him about the nature of these affairs.

The Imam al-MustaŒsir offers his thanks to al-Şulayhī (p. 27)

In a letter dated in the first ten days of Rabī' II 455/2–12 April 1063, the Imam al-MustaŒsir thanks al-Şulayhī for his attempts to settle the conflicts in Mecca and praises him for his restraint during the pilgrimage. He insists that al-Şulayhī not be distressed over whether or not his return from Mecca will be interpreted as a sign of weakness or cowardice. Al-MustaŒsir says that it is clear to those who understand affairs that it was the Fatimid caliph who prevented him from defending his honour in Mecca.

In response to al-Şulayhī's report that the two groups in Mecca began hostilities again after his departure, al-MustaŒsir fears that a foreign hand might gain control over the *ḥaram* because of this conflict. He enjoins al-Şulayhī to advance on Mecca and advises him to write to the Banū al-Ḥasan to warn them concerning their past behaviour toward him. Al-MustaŒsir informs al-Şulayhī that he will respond to the *amīr* Ḥasan b. Aḥmad who had incited al-Şulayhī to battle during the *hajj*. Finally, he permits al-Şulayhī to dispense money from the treasury to 'Abd Allāh b. Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥusaynī.

After al-Şulayhī returns from the *hajj* to Yaman, several groups stage a revolt against his rule in 'Ans, and there are continued disturbances in Zabīd. The rebels appoint a leader for themselves and take refuge in the mountains. Al-Şulayhī marches to their fortresses and takes them by force. After many casualties, the opposition surrenders.

Al-Şulayḥī writes to al-Mustanşir concerning the governance of Mecca (p. 31)

In his letter, al-Şulayḥī describes several difficult problems to al-Mustanşir. The ruler of Mecca, the *sharīf* Shukr b. Abi'l-Futūḥ al-Ḥasanī, has stolen the money and equipment of al-Şulayḥī from the coastal city of al-Ḥalī and attempted to stir up the masses against him. He complains to al-Mustanşir concerning Ibn 'Arrāf al-Qulaydī who has rejected the right doctrine in religion. Finally al-Şulayḥī requests permission to appoint the grandson of the present *qāḍī* of Mecca as the *qāḍī*'s successor.

Al-Mustanşir answers his requests in a letter (*sijill*) dated 9 Jumādā I 456/29 April 1064. He states in the body of the *sijill* that he is responding to two separate letters (*sijillāt*): the first was issued from Şan'a', dated Sha'bān 455/July–August 1063, and the second was issued from al-Mahjar, written in Shawwāl 455/September–October 1063. After a summary of the contents of the two letters, al-Mustanşir replies to each request of al-Şulayḥī separately.

The first issue is that of the rebels who had revolted in the previous year upon al-Şulayḥī's return from Mecca. Al-Mustanşir assures al-Şulayḥī that he will receive divine support to assist him in the *da'wa* of Yaman. With regard to Ibn 'Arrāf, al-Mustanşir desires that he be sent to his court in Cairo so that his opinions can be corrected. The Imam al-Mustanşir approves the appointment of the grandson of Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd Allāh as *qāḍī* of Mecca. Finally al-Mustanşir signals the growing importance of al-Şulayḥī to the *da'wa* by granting him the title 'Support of the Caliphate' (*'umdat al-khilāfa*).

Idrīs also reports that al-Mustanşir persuaded the ruler of Mecca, the *sharīf* Shukr b. Abi'l-Futūḥ al-Ḥasanī, to follow the command of the *dā'ī* al-Şulayḥī.

Continuation of the history of the reign of al-Mustanşir (p. 36)

After recounting the early history of the Ismaili *da'wa* in Yaman, Idrīs now returns to the narrative of the reign of al-Mustanşir. He follows with passages from the biography (*sira*) of al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shirāzī, the Ismaili missionary who travelled from Shirāz in Persia to Cairo in 438/1047.¹¹

Biography of the chief *dā'i* al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (p. 37)

Idrīs's quotations from the *Sīra* of al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn begin with his arrival in Cairo in the year 439/1047. He reaches Egypt after a long journey that began at the start of the previous year in Shīrāz. Once in Cairo, al-Mu'ayyad goes directly to the caliphal palace (*dār al-khilāfa*) to meet with the *wazīr* Ṣadaqa b. Yūsuf b. 'Alī al-Falāhī.¹² After the meeting, al-Mu'ayyad is taken to a small house that has been furnished for him in a modest fashion.

Al-Mu'ayyad and al-Tustarī (p. 38)

Al-Mu'ayyad quickly learns that the powerful Jewish merchant, Abū Sa'īd al-Tustarī, is effectively in control of the affairs of state in Egypt. He discovers that al-Tustarī is not to be trusted and that he opposes the faithful practitioners of religion. However, al-Tustarī greets al-Mu'ayyad kindly and is pleased by his visit. Al-Tustarī provides al-Mu'ayyad with fine clothing and gold dinars that he takes with his own hand from the storehouse of the caliph.

Al-Mu'ayyad also meets with al-Qāsim b. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mān,¹³ the great-grandson of al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, who was the chief *dā'i* of the Fatimid *da'wa*. Al-Mu'ayyad believes that perhaps al-Qāsim b. 'Abd al-'Azīz fears that al-Mu'ayyad will deprive him of his position at court.

However, the greater hindrance to the acceptance of al-Mu'ayyad in Cairo is Abū Sa'īd al-Tustarī. Initially al-Tustarī promises to act as al-Mu'ayyad's patron at court, but al-Mu'ayyad is forced to question his sincerity. He imagines that al-Tustarī secretly fears allowing the Imam al-MustaŒir to discover his true worth. Al-Tustarī senses that when al-MustaŒir becomes familiar with the learning and intelligence of al-Mu'ayyad, the caliph will no longer have any regard for his own talents. The conflict between al-Tustarī and al-Mu'ayyad finally reaches a climax when al-Mu'ayyad says (referring to the condition of the ruler), 'It is of no use waiting outside the door of one who is under guardianship. The reigns of power are in the hands of others and not in his own hands.'

Al-Tustarī meets his end at the hands of Turkish soldiers. Al-

Mu'ayyad relates a rumour that perhaps the *wazīr* Ṣadaqa b. Yūsuf al-Falāḥī was behind the murder of al-Tustarī.¹⁴

The meeting of al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn and the Imam al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh (p. 41)

The passing of al-Tustarī provides al-Mu'ayyad with the opportunity to have an audience with the Imam al-Mustanṣir on 29 Sha'bān 439/18 February 1048. At first, al-Mu'ayyad is astonished by the grandeur of the court and is unable to speak in the presence of al-Mustanṣir. He states that when his eye fell on the Imam he was gripped with fear and tears came to his eyes. Noting the *dā'ī*'s fear, the Imam attempts to calm him. He bids al-Mu'ayyad to approach him. Al-Mu'ayyad kisses the hand of the Imam and places it on his eye and on his chest and then leaves his presence. Al-Mu'ayyad complains to the *wazīr* Ṣadaqa b. Yūsuf al-Falāḥī of his problem in speaking with al-Mustanṣir. The *wazīr* grants him a special privilege to enter and speak with the Imam whenever he desires.

Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Yāzūrī is appointed *wazīr* on 7 Muḥarram 442/1 June 1050. His first action is to distance al-Mu'ayyad from the Imam. Idrīs states that this was a result of al-Mu'ayyad's close ties to the previous *wazīr* Ṣadaqa b. Yūsuf al-Falāḥī. Al-Mu'ayyad endures many insults during this period but nevertheless remains patient.

In the year 447/1055–6, the Banū Qurra, a branch of the Banū Hilāl, raid Gīza. The Imam al-Mustanṣir sends troops who defeat the tribe thoroughly after a long battle. The *wazīr* al-Yāzūrī is congratulated by many for his victory over the Banū Qurra and receives robes of honour from the Imam. During this period, al-Mu'ayyad visits al-Yāzūrī and regains some of his lost stature. The *wazīr* appoints al-Mu'ayyad to a position in the chancery but he is not pleased with this position and complains to al-Yāzūrī.

The rise of the Saljūqs (p. 45)

Idrīs reports that when the Saljūqs conquered the Persian city of Rayy, they communicated with the Byzantines in an attempt to

take over Fatimid possessions in Syria and the Bilād al-Shām. He refers to the Abbasid *wazīr*, Abu'l-Qāsim 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Muslima, as the 'magnet of evil' (*magnāṭis al-sharr*), perhaps as an allusion to his invitation to Ṭoḡhril Beg to seize control of Baghdad.¹⁵

In the face of the increasing danger from the Saljūqs and in fear of a Byzantine-Saljūq alliance, al-Mu'ayyad writes to Abu'l-Ḥārith al-Basāsīrī, a military commander in Baghdad allied with the Fatimids.¹⁶ However al-Mu'ayyad's first messages fail to reach Baghdad because of the mysterious death of the messenger en route to the city. When al-Mu'ayyad arrives in Mecca for the performance of the *ḥajj*, he attempts once again to contact al-Basāsīrī. However, by the time this second letter reaches Baghdad, the forces of Ṭoḡhril Beg are already stationed in the city having taken it from the Būyid *amīrs*. Al-Basāsīrī and his companions, having left Baghdad upon the advance of the Saljūqs, are gladdened by the support promised by al-Mu'ayyad in his letter. They desire money, horses and weapons in order to retake Baghdad. Al-MustaŒir agrees to their requests and orders the *wazīr* to place al-Mu'ayyad in charge of these important affairs. Initially, al-Mu'ayyad is apprehensive about taking this position, but he eventually agrees.

Al-Mu'ayyad supports the movement of al-Basāsīrī (p. 48)

When al-Mu'ayyad is summoned to the presence of al-MustaŒir, he is provided with clothes adorned with gold and stipends to give to his supporters. Al-Mu'ayyad states that his advisers fear that the money with him will be stolen before he reaches Aleppo. The *wazīr* al-Yāzūrī advises al-Mu'ayyad that he ask for three thousand horsemen from the tribe of Kalb to accompany him in the region under Ibn Ṣāliḥ's control so as to ensure his safe passage. However, al-Mu'ayyad does not think this is a proper policy for it might alienate him from Ibn Ṣāliḥ. When al-Mu'ayyad reaches Damascus, he attempts to win over Ibn Ṣāliḥ to the Fatimid cause, while the *wazīr* al-Yāzūrī continues to warn him of the danger posed by Ibn Ṣāliḥ. The latter visits al-Mu'ayyad accompanied by a small number of soldiers from his army. After a tense greeting the two

men meet with one another. Al-Mu'ayyad wins Ibn Ṣāliḥ's loyalty and instructs him in the doctrines of the Ismailis.

During this period al-Mu'ayyad receives in Aleppo a letter from Ibn Marwān, the ruler of Āmid. In his letter Ibn Marwān depicts the Saljūq leader as responsible for the unjust seizure of money and the violation of women. Ibn Marwān states that he responded to the Saljūqs through deception and dissimulation. Finally he adds that the amount of funds that al-Mu'ayyad has brought with him will not be sufficient to meet the present need.

Al-Mu'ayyad responds to Ibn Marwān stating that he will bring the question of funds to the Fatimid court. Al-Mu'ayyad further argues that although the amount of money that he will bring to Aleppo may be less than sufficient, the mission against the Saljūqs is in accordance with divine will.

Al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīm in al-Raḥba (p. 54)

Al-Mu'ayyad writes to Abu'l-Ḥārith al-Basāsīrī and a group of the Turkish soldiers in Baghdad (*al-Atrāk al-Baghādādiyya*) and arranges a meeting. Accompanied by Thimāl b. Ṣāliḥ and the Banū Kilāb, al-Mu'ayyad meets Abu'l-Ḥārith al-Basāsīrī in al-Raḥba. Al-Mu'ayyad describes the multitudes of different peoples, Arabs, Persians, Turks and Kurds, who have gathered there. He presents robes of honour to the *amīrs* of the Kurds and the Arabs. The Iraqis then begin to praise the Fatimids and curse the Abbasids. Al-Mu'ayyad distributes money to the troops. Some appear grateful to receive the payments, but others demand more. Al-Mu'ayyad censures them for their behaviour, noting that the money they receive has been lawfully gathered and that they should act appropriately in heeding the commands of the Imam.

The covenant with al-Basāsīrī (p. 56)

Al-Mu'ayyad reads out to all present the contract (*'ahd*) that al-Mustanṣir has made with al-Basāsīrī. The *'ahd*, dated Ṣafar 448/ April–May 1056, is addressed to al-Basāsīrī as the leader of the army (*ṣāḥib al-jaysh*). In this contract, al-Mustanṣir states that when he saw that al-Basāsīrī was offering his support for the Fatimids in

Iraq, the Imam believed that it was right to offer him the leadership of the Fatimid armies. Al-MustaŒir wishes al-Basāsīrī success in battle and good fortune and urges him to be pious.

Al-Mu'ayyad and Dubays b. Mazyad (p. 59)

The ruler of al-Mawşil, the *amīr* Abu'l-Ma'ālī Quraysh b. Badrān, and the ruler of al-Ĥilla and the Banū Mazyad, Nūr al-Dawla Dubays b. 'Alī b. Mazyad, both travel to Baghdad and attempt to reconcile themselves with the Saljūq Ṭoghriġ Beg. However upon their arrival in Baghdad they find Ṭoghriġ Beg unresponsive to their desires. Al-Mu'ayyad convinces Ibn Mazyad to join the Fatimid army, while Quraysh b. Badrān remains loyal to the Abbasids. Ibn Mazyad thus joins the armies of al-Basāsīrī and the Fatimids, and al-Mu'ayyad administers to him the oath of loyalty to the Imam al-MustaŒir. Ibn Mazyad is promised the command of the tribes of Iraq from the eastern bank of the Euphrates up to the limit of conquest by the Fatimid forces. Reinforcements come from the tribe of Banū Kilāb in Syria. For a period of one month, al-Mu'ayyad is occupied in provisioning these Fatimid armies.

The victory in Sinjār (p. 60)

The combined forces of the Syrian and Egyptian armies accompanied by some Iraqi troops, under the command of al-Mu'ayyad, al-Basāsīrī, Ibn Mazyad and Thimāl b. Şāliġ, depart from camp. Al-Basāsīrī desires to attack Quraysh b. Badrān, who remains loyal to the Saljūq leader Ṭoghriġ Beg. Al-Mu'ayyad sends a letter to Quraysh in al-Mawşil, warning him of the impending threat from the Fatimid forces and offering him a chance at reconciliation. Quraysh wavers and delays until finally the Fatimid force decides to march on al-Mawşil. Saljūq armies are sent to support Quraysh in great number.

The Fatimid and Saljūq armies meet at Sinjār. During the battle, Ibn Mazyad attempts to build tribal solidarity among his troops against the Turks by placing the litters of his wives among the tribal contingents of al-Kalb, al-'Uqayl and al-Numayr. The unveiled women urge the troops onward in the battle, calling upon

their noble Arab tribal lineages. The battle results in a victory for the forces of the Fatimids on the *‘Īd al-fiṭr*. Al-Mu’ayyad writes a letter to the Imam al-Mustanshir informing him that the Fatimid armies have inflicted a great loss on the Saljūq forces. He reports that upwards of two thousand seven hundred men from the Saljūq army have been killed in the battle, while less than twenty men have fallen on the Fatimid side.

The conquest of Kūfa (p. 63)

After the remaining troops of Quraysh b. Badrān have joined the armies of the Fatimids, they march from al-Mawṣil. Al-Mu’ayyad receives word that Saljūq troops have left Baghdad and are heading southward to meet the Fatimid troops. Idrīs reports that al-Mu’ayyad received a letter from Maḥmūd b. al-Aḥzam announcing that Fatimid forces had been victorious in Kūfa and the *khutba* was proclaimed there in the name of the Imam al-Mustanshir.

The establishment of the *da‘wa* in Wāsiṭ (p. 65)

After a short while, al-Mu’ayyad receives another letter from Ibn Qasāndas concerning the establishment of the Fatimid *da‘wa* and the minting of coins in the name of al-Mustanshir in Wāsiṭ. The letter describes the inhabitants of the region surrounding Wāsiṭ rejoicing at the establishment of justice and the inclusion of the name of al-Mustanshir in the *khutba*.

Al-Mu’ayyad fi’l-Dīn in Aleppo (p. 66)

As the Fatimid armies continue to swell in number under the command of al-Basāsīrī, Abu’l-Faṭḥ Muḥammad b. Warām, Quraysh b. Badrān and Dubays b. Mazyad, the Saljūq Ṭoghriḥ Beg fears the strength of the forces opposing him. He spends both his own funds and those of the Abbasid caliph to prepare for their threat. However, when the armies of the Fatimids suffer from disunity and unruliness among the troops, Ṭoghriḥ Beg moves against the Fatimid armies. Al-Mu’ayyad realizes the problems among his troops and sends messages to the *amīrs* alerting them to the danger of their weakness.

The various members of the Fatimid armies hold back waiting for the money that is destined to arrive from Cairo. When funds reach Thimāl b. Ṣāliḥ, the ruler of Aleppo, he entrusts the money to his brother 'Aṭiyya b. Ṣāliḥ to convey it to al-Mu'ayyad in al-Raḥba. However, 'Aṭiyya b. Ṣāliḥ attempts to seize the money for himself and takes refuge in his fortress.

Al-Mu'ayyad seeks to renew his army's strength by writing to the *amīrs* of the various local tribes. Meanwhile, the Saljūq *wazīr* al-Kundurī tries to win over these same *amīrs* who were previously loyal to the Fatimids. Al-Mu'ayyad returns to Aleppo in an attempt to retrieve the lost funds. On his way, he meets 'Aṭiyya b. Ṣāliḥ, who begs for his forgiveness. Because of the magnitude of the threat presently facing them, al-Mu'ayyad convinces Thimāl b. Ṣāliḥ to reconcile with his brother, 'Aṭiyya. Abu'l-Ḥārith al-Basāsīrī follows al-Mu'ayyad to Aleppo, accompanied by Quraysh b. Badrān and members of the Banū 'Uqayl. Al-Mu'ayyad meets with al-Basāsīrī at Dayr al-Ḥāfir near Aleppo.

Idrīs describes how Thimāl b. Ṣāliḥ is not disposed favourably to the Fatimids until he meets al-Mu'ayyad who instructs him in Ismaili doctrines. Convinced by these teachings, Thimāl b. Ṣāliḥ cedes control of the city of Aleppo to the Imam al-Mustaṣṣir. Al-Mu'ayyad also convinces other notables in Aleppo, and the armies of al-Mustaṣṣir are allowed to pass freely into the city.

A communication between Ibrāhīm b. Īnāl and al-Basāsīrī (p. 69)

A letter arrives from the brother of Ṭoghril Beg, Ibrāhīm b. Īnāl, to al-Basāsīrī while he is in Bālis, a village between Aleppo and Raqqa. In this letter, Ibrāhīm b. Īnāl agrees to act covertly on behalf of the Fatimids in order to undermine the position of Ṭoghril Beg in Baghdad. He asks for payment from the Fatimids for deposing the current Abbasid caliph and for the pronouncement of the *khutba* in Baghdad for al-Mustaṣṣir.

Al-Mu'ayyad is greatly pleased by this news. He responds to Ibrāhīm b. Īnāl in a letter accompanied with money and robes of honour. He then orders al-Basāsīrī and Quraysh b. Badrān to return to al-Raḥba and al-Mawṣil respectively to plan their later actions against Ṭoghril Beg. However, al-Basāsīrī accompanies

Quraysh b. Badrān to al-Mawṣil, where they find the city occupied by the Saljūqs. They liberate the city from Saljūq control.

As a result of the victory of the combined forces of the Fatimids at Sinjār and the recent re-conquest of al-Mawṣil by Quraysh b. Badrān, Ṭoghriḷ Beg becomes anxious. He sends letters in his own name and that of the Abbasid caliph to Khurāsān asking the inhabitants to support his armies in Iraq. He believes that with these reinforcements he would be able to conquer Egypt and Syria.

However, when Ṭoghriḷ Beg marches to take al-Mawṣil from Quraysh b. Badrān, Ibrāhīm b. Īnāl seizes Ṭoghriḷ's treasury and sends messengers directly to al-Mu'ayyad and Quraysh b. Badrān, informing them of the same. Ibrāhīm then takes the funds of Ṭoghriḷ Beg and moves them to the Jibāl for safekeeping.

Taking advantage of the situation, Quraysh b. Badrān and al-Basāsīrī head towards Baghdad raising the flags of al-Mustanṣir. The inhabitants of Baghdad complain of the injustices that they had suffered under Saljūq rule.

Al-Basāsīrī enters Baghdad (p. 71)

Idrīs compares the arrival of al-Basāsīrī in Baghdad¹⁷ to the 'descent of grace from the sky' (*nuzūl al-rahma min al-samā*'), and the 'breaking of dawn after darkness' (*infijār al-ṣubḥ ba'd al-zalmā*'). The people accompany him to the caliphal palace where he takes the Abbasid caliph into his custody. The *wazīr* Ibn Muslima is then seized, dressed in cow leather and horns, and executed along with Ibn al-Ma'mūn, who had been his messenger to the Saljūq Turks. However, al-Basāsīrī refuses to hand over the Abbasid caliph to the Fatimids because their *wazīrs* had refused to compensate him adequately for his actions. Instead he places the Abbasid caliph in the custody of neighbouring Arab tribes.

The Fatimids rule in Baghdad (p. 71)

Idrīs states that the name of Imam al-Mustanṣir was proclaimed on the *minbars* of the city, and glad tidings were spread throughout the heavens. At this time, the Fatimids had sovereignty over Egypt, Barqa, the Ḥijāz, Yaman and Syria, and as a result of the

victories over the Saljūqs, Fatimid 'flags wave' in Kūfa, Wāṣit and Baghdad.

Ṭoghriġ Beg restores the Abbasid caliphate (p. 74)

Idrīs reports that the Abbasid caliph was held hostage for an entire year and the *khutba* in Baghdad read in the name of al-MustaŒsir. After this period, Ṭoghriġ Beg strengthens his armies and arranges for the release of the Abbasid caliph from the tribes holding him. After the death of al-Basāsiri and the killing of Ibrāhīm b. Īnāl, Ṭoghriġ Beg returns to Baghdad and reinstalls the Abbasid caliph.

Idrīs attributes the Fatimid setback to discord in Cairo between the *wazīr* and the Imam al-MustaŒsir. He believes that it was caused by the delay in responding to the renewed strength of the Saljūqs.

Al-Mu'ayyad returns to Egypt (p. 75)

After losing Aleppo to the forces of Ṭoghriġ Beg, al-Mu'ayyad returns to Cairo. Once there, he retreats into religion and stays away from those who are concerned with the affairs of state, fearing censure of his conduct in Iraq. He desires to speak with the Imam al-MustaŒsir in private and writes to him several lines in verse apologizing for his long absence. Al-Mu'ayyad's poem is well received by al-MustaŒsir, who answers him with several verses in return.

Al-Mu'ayyad as the chief *dā'ir* (p. 76)

The Imam al-MustaŒsir places al-Mu'ayyad in charge of all of the activities of the Fatimid *da'wa* throughout the separate territories (*jazā'ir*).¹⁸ Idrīs includes here a copy of letter(s) that the Imam writes to al-Mu'ayyad concerning his appointment to supervise the *da'wa* hierarchy. He praises al-Mu'ayyad for his work in the *da'wa* and instructs him to educate and 'irrigate with the water of guidance the gardens of souls.'

Al-MustaŒsir sends another letter concerning his re-appointment to supervise the *da'wa*. In this *sijill*, dated Dhu'l-Ĥijja 455/December 1063, al-MustaŒsir recounts the past history of al-

Mu'ayyad in the *da'wa* in Fārs, Kirmān and Khūzistān in Persia, his tests in Egypt, and his mission on behalf of the Imam against the Saljūqs. He credits al-Mu'ayyad for his role in the conquest of Aleppo by the Fatimid armies. Finally, he enjoins al-Mu'ayyad to encourage the believers to fulfill their religious obligations, perform the Friday prayers, obey religious observances, undertake the pilgrimage and visit the tomb of the Prophet.

Idrīs then describes the manner in which al-Mu'ayyad brings unity and stability to the Fatimid *da'wa*. Al-Mu'ayyad receives letters from *dā'īs* in various regions of the *da'wa* organization and responds to their queries.

Idrīs reports that the *wazīr* al-Yāzūrī was killed in Tinnīs in the month of Muḥarram 450/February 1058. Abu'l-Faraj Muḥammad b. Ja'far al-Maghribī replaced him as *wazīr*.

The civil war in Egypt (p. 84)

In the year 454/1062, fighting erupts between the Turkish and African factions (*al-Atrāk wa'l-'abīd*) in the Fatimid army. The disturbance begins when the African soldiers complain that one of their number has been killed by a group of Turkish soldiers. The *wazīr*, not wishing to inflame the passions of either side, minimizes the importance of the matter and does not attempt to resolve it. However, the situation quickly spins out of control and a disturbance (*fitna*) ensues in the alleys behind the mosque of al-Anwar (al-Ḥākīm) in Cairo. The Turkish and African factions meet at the gates of Cairo and engage in battle. The African soldiers suffer many casualties.

During this period of strife, an elaborate gift is sent by the *dā'ī* of Yaman, 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī, to the Imam al-Mustaṣṣir. The gift consists of many gold and silver items, weapons, painted fabrics, musk, ambergris, camphor and aloes-wood, and is accompanied by craftsmen and slavegirls. When the gift arrives in Aswān, the Turks and African soldiers compete over which faction has the privilege of delivering it to al-Mustaṣṣir.

Ibn Ḥamdān, the leader of the Turks, heads to Aswān to escort the shipment to Cairo. However, the African soldiers, under the leadership of the *amīr* Futūḥ al-Shāmī al-Makanī, seize the gift.

They take with them a group of envoys sent by the *dā'i* 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḫī and retreat to Asyūṭ. Undeclared, Ibn Ḥamdān gathers a large group of thirty thousand Turkish soldiers and tribesmen, who demand payment and weapons from the state. The Imam al-MustaŒir writes to the leader of the African slave soldiers asking them to deliver the gift to the *amīr* Shams al-Mulk and the chief *qāḏī* al-Malījī.

When the African soldiers arrive at Abū Şīr, a village in al-Fayyūm, to hand over the gift, three important members of the Turkish faction are present. The two factions conclude a truce. The *amīr* Futūḫ al-Shāmī decides to escort the gift to al-MustaŒir in Cairo, but he takes only two hundred horsemen and seven hundred infantrymen in his retinue.

The small contingent of African soldiers encounters the larger Turkish force. The two groups greet one another and march together to the caliphal palace. The caliph formally urges both groups to resolve their differences. The gift finally arrives at the court two days later. When Ibn Ḥamdān sees the small number of troops accompanying Futūḫ al-Shāmī, he attempts once again to incite discord between the African and Turkish factions. A group of Turkish soldiers along with Kutāma Berbers attack the African soldiers that remain in Cairo. The forces of Futūḫ al-Shāmī are defeated in battle and he is killed.

The African soldiers regroup their forces around Ibn al-Nūn. Ibn Ḥamdān meanwhile blames al-MustaŒir for making the African soldiers strong at the expense of the Turks. He urges his followers to demand from the caliph greater amounts of payment by demonstrating in front of the palace.

Through the efforts of the *wazīr*, Ibn al-Muwaffaq fi'l-Dīn, one of the important *amīrs* of the Turkish contingent, Asad al-Dawla, no longer lends his support to Ibn Ḥamdān. In response, Ibn Ḥamdān orders two of his *amīrs* to exact vengeance on Asad al-Dawla or, if they cannot find him, to take revenge on the *wazīr* al-Muwaffaq. The two *amīrs* murder al-Muwaffaq as he is riding to meet the caliph in Cairo.

Ibn Ḥamdān gathers a large force at the Bāb al-Jadīd. From among the followers of the *amīr* Asad al-Dawla and others, the

Imam summons the troops who remain loyal to him to the caliphal palace. Al-Mustaṣṣir entrusts the *amīr* ‘Azīz al-Dawla with the command of the army and orders him to subdue Ibn Ḥamdān. When the troops of Ibn Ḥamdān see the battle standard of the Imam, they beat a hasty retreat towards the Mediterranean coastline. The property of Ibn Ḥamdān and his followers is confiscated and taken to the caliphal palace.

The caliph continues to urge ‘Azīz al-Dawla to pursue the forces of Ibn Ḥamdān who has taken refuge in the area west of Alexandria and gained the support of the Lawāta Berbers. ‘Azīz al-Dawla engages Ibn Ḥamdān in battles lasting several months, until the latter’s forces are depleted and the Turkish *amīrs* have left him. Ibn Ḥamdān then proceeds to Cairo to plead for forgiveness accompanied by a group of Arab soldiers. However, while en route to Cairo, he encounters the *amīr* ‘Azīz al-Dawla accompanied by twelve Turkish *amīrs*. Ibn Ḥamdān orders his Arab troops to attack the Turkish forces. This action destroys Ibn Ḥamdān’s relationship with the Turkish *amīrs* and he retreats to Alexandria.

Cairo is struck with a shortage of food. The price of one load of grain (*ḥiml*) reaches a hundred *mithqāls*. Many of the inhabitants and livestock die as a result of the food shortage. Ibn Ḥamdān sees this as an opportunity to attack Cairo. He gathers his forces and passes to an area near the Bāb al-Qanṭara.

Al-Mustaṣṣir places Asad al-Dawla in command of the army. The latter defeats the forces of Ibn Ḥamdān, who retreats once again to Alexandria in a state of nervous despair. He then decides that it is in his best interest to feign a plea for forgiveness to the Imam. Al-Mustaṣṣir receives Ibn Ḥamdān who remains in Cairo attempting to gain influence and acquire property and money. Having endured enough of Ibn Ḥamdān’s treachery, al-Mustaṣṣir finally plots his elimination with Asad al-Dawla who is joined by several Turkish *amīrs*. Ibn Ḥamdān, his two brothers and companions, are killed in revenge for what they unlawfully took from the state.

Al-Mu‘izz b. Bādīs ends the Fatimid *da‘wa* in Ifrīqiya (p. 94)

In this section, Idrīs provides information concerning al-Mu‘izz

b. Bādīs, the fourth ruler of the Zīrid dynasty in North Africa.¹⁹ The account centers on al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs's termination of the Fatimid *da'wa* in Ifrīqiya, and is framed around a copy of a *sijill* sent from the Imam al-MustaŒsir to 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī describing this event, dated Ramaḍān 455/August–September 1063. It describes the manner in which the Fatimids retaliate using Bedouin tribes against al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs for his disobedience. When the Bedouin troops besiege the fortress of al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs in al-Mahdiyya, al-Mu'izz sends messengers to al-MustaŒsir begging his forgiveness. At the conclusion of his letter, al-MustaŒsir urges the *dā'ī* al-Şulayḥī to spread this information from the *minbars* of the mosques in Yaman, both in the cities and among the tribes.

Idrīs reports that ultimately al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs did not lose control of the area surrounding al-Mahdiyya, and that at his death his son inherited the rule over this region.

The completion of the history of 'Alī al-Şulayḥī (p. 98)

Idrīs then returns to recounting the history of the reign of 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī after 455/1063, the year in which he had gained control of the entirety of Yaman and settled the tribal leaders in Şan'a'.

The *amīr* al-A'azz Muhammad b. 'Alī al-Şulayḥī (p. 98)

When the *dā'ī* 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī sees that his son, al-A'azz Muhammad b. 'Alī, has reached the age of maturity, he appoints him as his successor in the *da'wa*. He writes to the Imam al-MustaŒsir concerning this appointment asking for his permission and blessing. Al-MustaŒsir replies in a *sijill* dated Rajab 456/June–July 1064, in which he agrees to the appointment of al-A'azz as the successor. As a recognition of his status, the Imam gives him the title 'the Mighty Amīr, Sun of the Sublime' (*al-amīr al-a'azz shams al-ma'ālī*) and also gives his two younger brothers the titles of 'Revered Amīr' (*al-amīr al-mukarram*), and 'Fortunate Amīr' (*al-amīr al-muwaffaq*).

Idrīs reports that As'ad b. Shihāb al-Şulayḥī, who had been acting as the governor (*'āmil*) of Zabīd for 'Alī b. Muḥammad

al-Şulayhī, died in the month of Sha‘bān 456/July–August 1064. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad places his son al-A‘azz in the governorship of Zabīd and Tihāma, and appoints his second son, al-Mukarram, as the governor of al-Janad. Another brother of this al-Şulayhī, ‘Abd Allāh, is given rule over the areas adjacent to the fortress of al-Ta‘kar. In the year 457/1064–5, ‘Abd Allāh constructs the city of Dhū Jibla.

The *dā‘ī* Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayhī, along with his wife, al-Ḥurra Asmā’ bint Shihāb, and their youngest son, the *amīr* al-Muwaffaq, travel to Zabīd. They stay there until Muḥarram 458/December 1065, when they return to Şan‘ā’ accompanied by their older son, the *amīr* al-A‘azz Muḥammad b. ‘Alī. Al-A‘azz is struck with a fever on the road to Şan‘ā’ and his father orders him to return to Zabīd, where he arrives on 20 Muḥarram 458/22 December 1065. He quickly deteriorates and passes away on 22 Muḥarram 458/24 December, 1065 at the age of twenty-seven.

‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayhī and his wife are in the vicinity of Jabal Masār when they receive a letter informing them of the death of their son. They return to Zabīd immediately. Arriving in Zabīd four days after the death, they find that he has not yet been buried. At the grave, which is located next to As‘ad b. Shihāb, the uncle of the deceased, ‘Alī b. Malik recites a poem that deeply moves ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayhī who recites the Qur’ān for seven days at the side of his son’s grave. In Şafar 458/January 1066, he sends letters to the Imam al-Mustansīr informing him of the death of his son. At this time, Maymūna bint ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, the sister of the deceased *amīr* al-A‘azz, dies from grief.

Idrīs relates here a story which he states is taken from the historical work on the life of the *dā‘ī* al-Mukarram al-Şulayhī (*Sīrat al-Dā‘ī al-Mukarram al-Şulayhī*)²⁰ in which the Imam al-Mustansīr miraculously has knowledge of the death of al-A‘azz Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Şulayhī before messengers from Yaman reach him in Cairo.

Al-Mukarram Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Şulayhī (p. 102)

Al-Mustansīr orders the two Şulayhīd messengers residing at court in Cairo to return to Yaman. They bring to Yaman robes of honour

and a *sijill* in which the Imam expresses his condolences to 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī. The letter is dated Rabī' I 458/31 January–1 March, 1066. It is received by 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī in the region of Abyan on Rabī' II 459/February-March 1067. In the letter, the Imam enjoins al-Şulayḥī to appoint his son al-Mukarram as his successor. A second letter follows from the Imam to al-Mukarram making an official covenant (*'ahd*) with him.

Idrīs reports that 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī was pleased with the decision of al-MustaŒsİR which freed him from the grief that he felt for his departed son. He returns to Şan'ā' and orders that the nomination of al-Mukarram as his successor be announced from the mosque of Şan'ā' on 8 Jumādā I 459/27 March 1067. Accounts of the excellent characteristics of al-Mukarram are spread throughout Yaman. 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī marries his son al-Mukarram to al-Sayyida al-Ḥurra bint Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī. His younger brother, al-Muwaffaq, is married to Fāṭima bint Aḥmad b. al-Muzaffar al-Şulayḥī.

'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī sends the *qāḍī* 'Imrān b. al-Faḍl to the Imam al-MustaŒsİR to seek permission to perform the pilgrimage and to visit the Imam in Cairo. He also desires the installation of his second son al-Mukarram as his successor (*walī al-'ahd*). In a *sijill* dated Rabī' I 459/January-February 1067, al-MustaŒsİR once again offers his condolences to al-Şulayḥī. The letter reaches the *dā'i* when he is in a village in the vicinity of Ḥarāz on Jumādā I 459/ March-April 1067. Al-MustaŒsİR reiterates his support for the nomination of al-Mukarram as his successor because his first letter seems to have been delayed in reaching al-Şulayḥī. The Imam praises al-Sulayḥī for his persistence in asking him a second time concerning this matter.

Al-MustaŒsİR enjoins 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī to resolve the fighting in Mecca, and to ensure that the routes to the holy city are secure. He urges al-Şulayḥī to use caution and to avoid violence in attempting to quell the disturbances. He also encourages al-Şulayḥī to pursue the conquest of the Ḥaḍramawt, which the *dā'i* had mentioned in a previous letter. Finally the Imam politely refuses the request of al-Şulayḥī to visit him in Cairo, stating that although he would like to see him, the journey's distance

could prove troublesome. The Imam also adds that al-Şulayḥī also might suffer anxiety from leaving his rule in the hands of another.

Al-Mustanşir enhances the titles of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī with ‘the Dignity of the Amīrs and Power of the Kingship’ (*sharaf al-umarā’ wa ‘izz al-mulk*) and ‘Dignity of the Kingship’ (*sharaf al-mulk*). His wife, al-Ḥurra Asmā’ bint Shihāb, is given the title ‘Mother of the Chosen Amīrs’ (*umm al-umarā’ al-muntajibīn*).

‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī undertakes the pilgrimage (p. 110)

The *dā’ī* al-Şulayḥī makes preparations to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca and then to travel to the court of the Imam al-Mustanşir in Cairo. He takes with him a great amount of money and precious goods to be spent during his journey and gifts to be given to al-Mustanşir. He places his son al-Mukarram in charge of the affairs of state until his return, along with his maternal uncle Aḥmad b. Muẓaffar al-Şulayḥī. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī then writes to the chief *qāḍī* of Yaman, Lamak b. Mālik al-Ḥammādi,²¹ in Cairo asking him to seek permission for him to undertake the pilgrimage and to proceed to Cairo afterwards. When he does not receive an answer, he decides to travel to Mecca and upon his arrival in Mecca to reiterate his request to the Imam for permission to visit Cairo.

Before al-Şulayḥī’s departure for Mecca, he instructs al-Mukarram to rule with justice and to follow the commands of the divine law. A large number of tribesmen from the tribes of Banū Yām, Banū Janab and the Banū Sanḥān undertake the pilgrimage with him. Fearing that the roads will become too crowded, al-Şulayḥī allows them to travel ahead of him. He follows with a smaller retinue of six hundred soldiers, most of whom are his slaves. In his caravan are also members of his family.

‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī departs from Şan‘ā’ heading toward Mecca on 6 Dhu’l-Qa‘da 459/18 September 1067. He learns that Sa‘īd b. Najāḥ, the ‘cross-eyed’ (*al-aḥwal*), intent upon revolting against the Şulayḥids, has gathered an army of Africans. However, when al-Şulayḥī tries to apprehend Sa‘īd b. Najāḥ, the latter disappears.

Al-Şulayḥī is also informed that a slave of Sa‘īd b. Najāḥ, Farāḥ al-Bishī, is inciting the Africans to rebel against Şulayḥid rule. Al-

Şulayhī had originally trusted Faraḥ al-Bīshī and had placed him in control of Jabal Masār. However, when the *dā'i* learns of the treachery of Faraḥ al-Bīshī on behalf of Sa'īd b. Najāḥ, he summons him to his presence and reproaches him for his disloyalty. Seizing the opportunity, Faraḥ al-Bīshī attempts to come into the good graces of the *dā'i* by promising to deliver Sa'īd b. Najāḥ to him. However, when Faraḥ al-Bīshī returns to Zabīd, he too attempts to incite the Africans to revolt. When 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayhī learns of Faraḥ's treachery, he orders Abu'l-Sa'ūd b. Asa'd b. Shihāb b. Ja'far al-Şulayhī to arrest and execute him.

Fearing these developments, the Africans bring the news to Sa'īd b. Najāḥ. He comes out from hiding. Accompanied by a large force of African soldiers, he attacks Abu'l-Sa'ūd and Aḥmad, both sons of Asa'd b. Shihāb b. Ja'far al-Şulayhī. They are killed along with members of the *da'wa* from Ḥarāz in Zabīd. The forces of Sa'īd b. Najāḥ take possession of the property of the sons of As'ad b. Shihāb. Learning that al-Şulayhī is travelling to Mecca, accompanied by many members of his family, but without a large retinue of soldiers, Sa'īd b. Najāḥ gathers his forces for a surprise attack.

The murder of 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayhī (p. 114)

'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayhī is on the road to Mecca when the news of the battle in Zabīd reaches him. The African slaves of al-Şulayhī pretend to disapprove of the actions of Sa'īd b. Najāḥ, but they are secretly pleased and plot against the *dā'i*. They meet up with the forces of Najāḥ and disclose to them al-Şulayhī's marching route.

The Najāḥid forces meet al-Şulayhī on 11 Dhu'l-Qa'da 459/23 September 1067. Al-Şulayhī falls in battle along with his brothers and cousins. The fighting continues until the 15 Dhu'l-Qa'da 459/27 September 1067. The *amīr* al-Muwaffaq b. al-Sulṭān 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayhī and Mahannā b. 'Alī b. al-Muẓaffar continue to fight against the Najāḥids in order to protect the Şulayḥid women. Mahannā b. 'Alī b. al-Muẓaffar attempts to make a truce with Sa'īd b. Najāḥ in order to allow the remainder of the Şulayḥids to return to Şan'ā' unharmed. Sa'īd first accepts the agreement

and swears forty oaths that he will abide by it. However, after giving the men permission to leave the house in which they were protecting the women, the Najāhid forces quickly place the women in another house, slaughter the males and children, and steal the money that was in their possession.

Al-Hurra Asmā' bint Shihāb begs Sa'īd b. Najāh to allow the women to return to Ṣan'ā' in safety. Sa'īd refuses and forces the women to march with them to Zabīd. At the front of their caravan are the heads of 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī and his brother 'Abd Allāh impaled on lances. When the Ṣulayḥid women arrive in Zabīd, they are guarded in a house and the severed heads of 'Alī b. Muḥammad and 'Abd Allāh are placed in their sight.

Al-Mukarram Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Ṣulayḥī (p. 117)

Al-Mukarram learns of the death of his father on 13 Dhu'l-Qa'da 459/25 September 1067 in Ṣan'ā'. He orders the six hundred Ḥijāzī troops that are with him in Ṣan'ā' to prepare for battle. When the leaders of the other *hajj* caravans closer to Mecca, namely 'Āmir b. Sulaymān al-Zawāḥī, Mudāfi' al-Janabī, Mālik b. Shihāb b. Ja'far, learn of the death of al-Ṣulayḥī they quickly return along the same route toward the location of 'Alī b. Muḥammad's caravan. They meet many of the forces of the Najāhids on the roads. They fight bravely against them and many of their number are killed. They arrive in Ṣan'ā' on 2 Dhu'l-Ḥijja 459/14 October 1067 and, together with their troops, pledge not to ask al-Mukarram for any compensation until they conquer the Najāhid forces and take their revenge for the murder of 'Alī b. Muhammad al-Ṣulayḥī.

Ismā'il b. Abī Ya'fir b. 'Abd Allāh and Saba' b. Aḥmad b. Muẓaffar al-Ṣulayḥī proceed southward to the areas of Yaḥṣub, 'Ans and Ru'āyn. The Ṣulayḥid forces manage to quell an uprising there and take much booty from those whom they have defeated. Al-Mukarram learns of this victory on 7 Dhu'l-Ḥijja 459/19 October 1067. Likewise 'Āmir b. Sulaymān al-Zawāḥī advances on Bilād Ḥimyar in order to quell the unrest there. The most important members of the tribe of Ḥimyar support him. He writes a letter informing al-Mukarram of this on 10 Dhu'l-Ḥijja 459/22 October 1067.

Idrīs reports that during this period the *sharīf* Abū Hāshim b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Yaḥyā al-Ḥasanī attempted to conquer Ṣan‘ā’ because he believed that the Ṣulayḥids had become weak. Idrīs then declares that the *sharīf* revealed his pomposity by naming himself ‘Commander of the Faithful’ (*amīr al-mu‘minīn*). But as a member of the Zaydī *madhhab*, al-Ḥasanī has the support of many tribal groups in the north of Yaman. The *sharīf*, desiring now to take Ṣan‘ā’ by force, reaches the area neighbouring the city in al-Manwa.

‘Amīr b. Sulaymān al-Zawāḥī returns to Ṣan‘ā’ in response to the call of al-Mukarram on 19 Dhu’l-Ḥijja 459/31 October 1067. Five hundred men from the tribe of Ḥimyar accompany him. Two days after his arrival, he and Aḥmad b. al-Muẓaffar al-Ṣulayḥī leave Ṣan‘ā’ heading toward the troops of the *sharīf* Ḥamza b. Abī Hāshim in al-Manwā. Supporting the *sharīf* are eight thousand men from the northern tribes. The forces of al-Ṣulayḥī exceed one thousand men only. Aḥmad b. Muẓaffar al-Ṣulayḥī scores a decisive victory over the Zaydī forces. Both the *sharīf* Abū Hāshim b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Yaḥyā al-Ḥasanī and his son are killed in battle along with eight hundred others.

The local inhabitants of Ḥarāz surround the fortress at Jabal Masār, which is held by Mālīk b. Shihāb al-Ṣulayḥī. Al-Mukarram orders Aḥmad b. al-Muẓaffar al-Ṣulayḥī, Ismā‘īl b. Abī Yu‘fir al-Ṣulayḥī, and ‘Amīr b. Sulaymān al-Zawāḥī to put down the rebellion in Ḥarāz. The troops of al-Mukarram remain in Ḥarāz for eight days, departing on 23 Muḥarram 460/3 December 1067. The armies of al-Mukarram head toward a confrontation with the tribe of Bakīl, on 30 Muḥarram 460/10 December 1067. The Ṣulayḥid army first attempts to convince the forces of Bakīl to desist from their former recalcitrance. When they refuse, a battle follows which results in over eight hundred and twenty deaths, including many important members of the tribe of Bakīl.

When the Ṣulayḥid army returns to Ṣan‘ā’, al-Mukarram receives a letter from As‘ad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṣulayḥī at the fortress of al-Ta‘kar. The letter recounts how an army of Najāḥid forces under the command of Bilāl and Abū Futūḥ, the sons of Najāḥ, besieged the fortress of al-Ta‘kar. The troops of As‘ad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṣulayḥī

met them at the location of Dhū Ashraq. There the Ṣulayḥids scored a decisive victory. The letter reports that the Najāḥid commanders, Bilāl and Abū Futūḥ, barely escaped with their lives.

**Al-Mukarram and the release of his mother from imprisonment
(p. 122)**

Al-Mukarram receives a letter from his mother, Asmā' bint Shihāb, who is imprisoned in Zabīd. She secretly placed this letter in a loaf of bread that she had given to a beggar. Upon breaking open the bread, the beggar discovered the letter and, realizing that it was intended for al-Mukarram, delivers it to him.

After reading the letter, al-Mukarram gathers the tribe of Qaḥṭān together and enjoins them to take revenge upon the Najāḥids and to free the Ṣulayḥid women. On 14 Ṣafar 460/24 December 1067, al-Mukarram received the support of the *qāḍī* 'Imrān b. al-Fāḍl al-Yāmī, Maṣṣūr b. Ḥamīd and al-Ḥusayn b. 'Amr al-Sanḥānī, who lead contingents from the tribes of Nahd, Yām and Shākir.

Al-Mukarram leaves for Zabīd on 19 Ṣafar 460/29 December 1067 accompanied by Aḥmad b. Muzaḥḥar al-Ṣulayḥī, Abu'l-Ḥusayn b. Muḥalhal b. al-Di'ām, al-Ḥusayn b. 'Amr al-Sanḥānī, 'Imrān b. al-Fāḍl al-Yāmī, Mudāfi' b. al-Ḥasan al-Janabī and Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Yāmī. He encourages only the strong to follow him into battle. He leaves Ismā'īl b. Abī Yu'fir along with a company of men from the Ḥijāz and Ḥarāz in control of the city of Ṣan'a'.

On their march to the Tihāma they pass through the region of Ḥarāz. The troops present themselves to al-Mukarram for military review. They number seven thousand infantry and four hundred cavalry. He advises them about proper behaviour, warning them not to seek battle for the sake of worldly pleasures but instead to take revenge on the Najāḥids. He commands his troops to conduct themselves properly, and makes them swear an oath to this effect.

When the troops of al-Mukarram finally reach Zabīd, he arranges them in battle formation divided according to tribal groups. The Ṣulayḥids meet the army of the Najāḥids, numbering eighteen thousand men, outside of the city of Zabīd. The Ṣulayḥids score a great victory over the Najāḥids. Mālik b. Shihāb b. Ja'far

al-Şulayhī dies from the wounds he sustains in the battle. After the battle is won, the troops of al-Mukarram attempt to locate Sa'īd b. Najāḥ al-Aḥwal, but they are unable to find him.

Al-Mukarram rushes to the house in which his mother is held in order to make certain that she and the other Şulayhid women are safe. In the meantime, the remaining Najāḥids gather in a house on the opposite side of the city. The Şulayhid forces release the children who come into their custody and al-Mukarram makes certain that the women are safe. He then locates the remainder of the Najāḥid army and destroys the place where they are hiding. Sa'īd b. Najāḥ however, manages to escape northwards to al-Mahjam.

Al-Mukarram leaves Zabīd on 18 Rabī' II 460/25 February 1068, and heads northward toward al-Qaḥma, in pursuit of the fleeing Najāḥids. At this moment he receives a letter from the acting ruler of Şan'ā', Ismā'il b. Abī Yu'fir, stating that the Zaydī *sharīf* Qāsim b. Ja'far had broken his agreement (*'ahd*) and was in the company of a large army with the intention of taking the city of Şan'ā'. Moreover, the forces from the Ḥijāz and the Ḥarāz were at odds with one another.

Al-Mukarram fears that he will lose Şan'ā' if he does not return immediately. He spends the evening in al-Dawma on 21 Rabī' II 460/28 February 1068. Al-Mukarram returns to Şan'ā' with al-Sayyida al-Ḥurra and the other women of the dynasty on 26 Rabī' II 460/4 March, 1068.

The death of Ismā'il b. Abī Yu'fir al-Şulayhī (p. 127)

When al-Mukarram returns to Şan'ā', Ismā'il b. Abī Yu'fir is overcome by a serious illness and lives for only ten more days. Al-Mukarram is filled with grief at the loss of one of the pillars of the *da'wa* and supporters of his state. The tribes had feared and respected him greatly in the areas surrounding Kaḥlān where he was governor. After his burial, al-Mukarram recites the Qur'ān at his graveside for three days.

The *qāḍī* Lamak b. Mālīk al-Ḥammādī (p. 127)

The chief *qāḍī* and *dā'ī* of Yaman, Lamak b. Mālīk al-Ḥammādī, returns to Yaman from Cairo. Idrīs says his arrival is a great support for al-Mukarram. He brings orders from the Imam al-Mustanşir that he should fulfil the role of the 'missionary of the pen' (*al-dā'ī bi'l-qalam*), while al-Mukarram be the 'missionary of the sword' (*al-dā'ī bi'l-sayf*).

Idrīs includes a long excerpt from 'The Precious Item of the Hearts' (*Tuḥfat al-qulūb*), a work by the *dā'ī* Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥāmidī.²² It describes 'Alī b. Muhammad al-Ṣulayḥī's conquest of Yaman, his desire to go on the *ḥajj*, travel to Iraq and then to visit the Imam al-Mustanşir in Cairo. In this account, al-Ṣulayḥī sends Lamak b. Mālīk along with a group of notables to ask for permission to visit the Imam in Cairo. They arrive in Cairo and are given residence with the chief *dā'ī* al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī at the Dār al-'Ilm. He speaks with al-Mustanşir concerning the request of al-Ṣulayḥī to visit Cairo. The Imam does not answer, except with the cryptic remark: 'How does he ask permission when the time of winter has come? (*kayf yasta'dhina wa qad ānn waqt al-shitā*).'

Lamak b. Mālīk al-Ḥammādī remains in Cairo as a student of al-Mu'ayyad until the end of winter when he again poses the same question to al-Mustanşir. Once again, the Imam gives him the same cryptic answer. Lamak b. Mālīk asks al-Mu'ayyad to intercede on his behalf with al-Mustanşir.

Al-Mu'ayyad returns with the same answer for five years (454–459/1062–1067), during which time Lamak b. Mālīk was his student in Cairo. After waiting for so many winters, Lamak b. Mālīk finally asks al-Mu'ayyad what the cryptic answer of the Imam might mean. Al-Mu'ayyad says: 'The speech of the Imams has a plain and a hidden meaning, and the truth is that only Allāh knows the answer (*Inna li-kalām al-a'imma zāhiran wa bāṭinan wa ḥaqīqa lā ya'lim dhalika illā Allāh ta'ālā*).'

After his many years of training in Cairo, Lamak b. Mālīk is finally given the opportunity to speak with the Imam concerning twenty-seven questions that only the Imam was capable of answering. During the fifth year of his stay in Cairo, the Imam orders

Lamak b. Mālik to come to his presence accompanied by al-Mu'ayyad. Al-MustaŒsir announces to Lamak b. Mālik that the Najāḥids had killed 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī at that very moment. His answer to the question of al-Mu'ayyad is: 'The time of winter has come, O Mu'ayyad, and he will now go on a new mission and a new affair (*qad ān waqt al-şitā' ya Mu'ayyad wa-lisawfa yarūḥ bi-sifāratin jadīdatin wa amrin jadīdin*).'

The *qāḍī* Lamak b. Mālik remains in Cairo for five more months. When al-MustaŒsir appoints al-Mukarram as the *dā'i* of Yaman, he sends Lamak to Yaman on the new 'mission and affair' that he had referred to earlier. The Imam says to Lamak: 'When we saw that the time had come upon that *dā'i* [i.e., 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥī] and that the winter harvesting had approached, we thought it best to delay you so that, although he might be killed in the region (*jazīra*) over which he held command, all of the righteous would not be killed with him.' Thus al-Mukarram and Lamak b. Mālik became the twin pillars of the *da'wa* in Yaman.

The remainder of the history of al-Mukarram al-Şulayḥī (p. 131)

Idrīs returns to the history of al-Mukarram in Yaman. Al-Mukarram heads from Şan'ā' to Dhubyān and the regions of Banū Bujayr and Banū Da'am. These tribes have taken the Zaydī *şarīf* al-Qāsim b. Ja'far as their Imam.²³ Idrīs states that the *şarīf* had deceived them by calling them to the imamate of his uncle, al-Ḥusayn b. Qāsim al-'Ayyānī, who was killed by the tribe of Hamdān sixty years earlier. The *şarīf* al-Qāsim b. Ja'far alleged that al-'Ayyānī would return and fill the world with justice. According to Idrīs, many of the masses followed him in error, while the wise supported his cause out of a desire to differ with the Şulayḥids.

In response to the problems in Dhubyān, al-Mukarram sends a letter to the *şarīf* al-Qāsim b. Ja'far warning him about his unjust actions. The *şarīf* answers that he has been given allegiance by the tribes of Dhubyān, al-Nihm and others. This angers al-Mukarram and he leaves Şan'ā' on 18 Jumādā II 460/24 April 1068, heading toward Dhubyān. The tribal groups of this region submit to al-Mukarram and take an oath of loyalty to his rule and that they would not support the *şarīf*.

On 29 Rabī‘ II 460/28 February 1068, al-Mukarram arrives in the western regions (*al-maghrib*) of Yaman. When he reaches the region of al-Lūmī, a messenger arrives from Asmā’ bint Shihāb informing him of the receipt of two letters from his governors. The first letter is from As‘ad b. ‘Abd Allāh. It describes the assembly of a large force in Ḥamrā’ headed by Ḥusayn b. Mughīra al-Tubba‘ī, Abu’l-‘Abbās al-Shāḥṭī and Abū Ismā‘īl al-Kalālī, which is engaged in unlawful acts throughout the countryside. This army of thirty thousand men from the regions of Yaḥṣub, Ru‘āyn and Zabīd has gathered in opposition to the Ṣulayḥids. However they are poorly armed and do not fare well against the much smaller Ṣulayḥid army led by ‘Abd Allāh b. Ma‘mar and ‘Alī b. Suwayd. The second letter is from the same two leaders of the Ṣulayḥid army stating that Sa‘īd b. Najāḥ is heading toward Ṣan‘ā’ with a large army. Likewise his two brothers and Yu‘fir b. Kirundī in al-Janad are besieging the army of As‘ad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṣulayḥī at Dhū Ashraq. They urge al-Mukarram to assist them, but it is difficult for al-Mukarram to return. He is in the proximity of Jabal Maswar and fears that his departure would create instability in this region.

At the end of Rabī‘ I, al-Mukarram moves from Lūmī to the village of al-Muda‘ in Ḥimyar where he meets Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Ṣulayḥī, Ḥāshid b. Kudāys al-Ṣulayḥī and ‘Amīr b. Sulaymān al-Zawāḥī. They make a joint ascent of Jabal Ḥamlān on 3 Jumādā I 460/10 March 1068. Upon seeing al-Mukarram and his forces, those occupying the mountain quickly flee from their positions. As a result of this conquest, groups from all over the western portion of Yaman offer their allegiance to al-Mukarram.

Al-Mukarram learns that Sa‘īd b. Najāḥ has gone to al-Mikhlāf. A letter has come to him from As‘ad b. ‘Abd Allāh verifying that he, along with Ibn Mughīra, al-Shaḥṭī, Kalālī and Ibn al-Kirundī, have ascended Jabal al-Shawāfī. Meanwhile the brothers of Sa‘īd b. Najāḥ have left, heading toward al-Ma‘āfir with a contingent of two thousand troops. Yu‘fir b. Kirundī, who is holding the fortress on Jabal Ṣabir, urges al-Mukarram to come to his aid in the face of the Najāḥid threat.

Al-Mukarram returns to Ṣan‘ā’ on 8 Jumādā I 460/15 March

1068. He remains there until 2 Jumādā II 460/8 April 1068, when he heads toward the Bilād Yaḥṣub, Ruʿāyn, ʿAns and Mikhlāf to face the forces of the Najāḥids. He first passes through the area of Baynūn and offers a guarantee of safety. When he reaches an area that has been settled by a group of the Banū Ḥārith, he subdues them after their refusal of his offers of safety. When al-Mukarram learns that the tribes of Ruʿāyn, Yaḥṣub and ʿAns have gathered together in a mountain fortress of Jabal Shiʿr, he requests aid from ʿAlī b. Mālik b. Shihāb al-Ṣulayḥī and Khawla b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Ṣulayḥī. The Ṣulayḥid forces surround the mountain and ascend to its peak. Those assembled against them retreat. The Ṣulayḥid armies surround the fortress (*ḥisn*) in al-Qarāniḥ where al-Shaḥṭī and Ḥusayn b. Mughīra al-Tubbaʿī have withdrawn. The two men ask for safe passage by the end of Jumādā II 460/5 May 1068. The rest of their followers soon also request safe passage from al-Mukarram.

On 12 Rajab 460/17 May 1068, al-Mukarram heads to al-Mikhilāf and proceeds to the city of Dhū Jibla the next day. He stays in this region until the 17 Rajab 460/22 May 1068, when he departs for al-Janad where he stays for two days. He is informed that the Abū Ismāʿīl al-Kalālī has strengthened his opposition against al-Mukarram and taken refuge in Jabal al-ʿAwd in Naba (?) and in Jabal Darwān near Yaḥṣub (?). However al-Kalālī, after only a week of revolt, asks for clemency from al-Mukarram on 27 Rajab 460/1 June 1068. Al-Mukarram returns to Ṣanʿāʾ on the 7 Shaʿbān 460/11 June 1068. Upon his triumphant return he spends the remainder of his time speaking with members of the *daʿwa*.

On 25 Shaʿbān 460/29 June 1068, al-Mukarram announces that he is going to take revenge on the Najāḥids. He orders his troops to undertake the *jihād*, and commands a letter be read to them concerning the value of the holy war. The people respond well to his exhortations and poetry is read to encourage the troops into battle. Al-Mukarram leaves on 1 Ramaḍān 460/4 July 1068 and heads toward Zabīd, stopping at al-ʿAmd where he meets ʿĀmir b. Sulaymān al-Zawāḥī and Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Ṣulayḥī. He

reviews an army of six hundred cavalry and ten thousand infantry outside the village of al-ʿAmd.

On 7 Ramaḍān 460/11 July 1068, al-Mukarram leaves al-ʿAmd and advances on Zabīd. In the meantime, he has learned that Saʿīd b. Najāḥ has departed Zabīd and moved in the direction of ʿAdan. When the Ṣulayḥid army reaches Zabīd, al-Mukarram learns that Saʿīd b. Najāḥ is in al-Janad. Al-Mukarram therefore despatches ʿĀmir al-Zawāḥī asking him to occupy the pass at Ṣayd so as to catch Saʿīd b. Najāḥ if he should return through it.

Al-Mukarram encourages his troops until they reach the forces of the Najāḥids in the region surrounding Jabal Shʿīr. When they learn that the approaching army is being led by al-Mukarram, the troops of the Najāḥids drop their weapons and turn in flight. The forces of al-Mukarram make a strong charge. A member of the tribe of Shākīr finally kills Saʿīd b. al-Najāḥ at a village called Mayih(?) and he brings his severed head to al-Mukarram. Ṣulayḥid forces kill Bilāl b. Najāḥ and his brother Mālīk b. Najāḥ at the Ṣayd pass. The hearts of the Ṣulayḥids are gladdened with the revenge that they have taken for the murder of ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī.

After these battles, al-Mukarram proceeds on 20 Ramaḍān 460/1 August 1068 to Dhū Jibla and continues toward al-Janad. There he divides the spoils of war consisting of camels, horses and mules among his troops. He returns to Zabīd on 29 Ramaḍān 460/1 August 1068. On 1 Shawwāl 460/3 August 1068, al-Mukarram performs the prayers of the *ʿĪd al-fiṭr* and speaks to the people, thanking God who had foreordained his revenge for his father's death.

When al-Mukarram enters the city of Zabīd, he is informed that the remainder of the Najāḥids had fled north to al-Jayyāsh b. Najāḥ in the village of al-Mahjam. Al-Mukarram remains in Zabīd until 4 Shawwāl 460/6 August 1068, when he appoints Saba' b. Aḥmad as his regent in the city and continues his pursuit of the Najāḥids, moving now toward the city of al-Mahjam. After his arrival in the area near al-Mahjam, his spies tell him that the forces of Jayyāsh have disbanded and are now heading toward Mecca. Al-Mukarram remains in al-Mahjam until 5 Dhu'l-Qa'da 460/5

September 1068. He appoints 'Alī and Muḥammad, the sons of Mālik b. Shihāb al-Ṣulayḥī, as regents over the village of al-Hajar. While al-Mukarram is en route to Zabīd in the village of al-Sā'id, he is met by Abu'l-Qāsim b. Abī Nūr and Sināḥ b. Abi'l-'Askar bearing letters from the Imam al-MustaŒsir, who sends his greetings and adds to the titles of al-Mukarram.

The letter is read out to the people on 27 Dhu'l-Qa'da 460/27 September 1068, and the reading is followed by a poem recited by Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Tihāmī. The poem praises the manner in which al-Mukarram has exacted revenge on the Najāḥids for the murder of his father, 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī.

When 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī and his brother 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad were murdered, a man named al-Naṣībī from the line of al-'Abbās b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, covered their bodies in expectation of a proper burial. When al-Mukarram passes through al-Mahjam on 11 Dhu'l-Qa'da 460/11 September 1068, he recovers the bodies of his father and uncle and takes them in coffins to Ṣan'ā' where he arrives on 2 Dhu'l-Hijja 460/2 October 1068.

On the next day, al-Mukarram marches in a procession behind the coffins of his father and uncle to the Jabāna of Ṣan'ā' accompanied by the notables of the Ṣulayḥid dynasty. Their bodies are interred on the side of the Jabāna. Al-Mukarram orders the construction of a shrine (*mashhad*) to contain the bodies.

The *mashhad* of al-Ṣulayḥī (p. 144)

Idrīs reports that the shrine (*mashhad*) of 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī has subsequently been effaced and its minaret destroyed. He places the blame for this especially on the Zaydī Imams who were very intent on the destruction of such monuments.

When the burial of his father is complete, al-Mukarram remains in the mosque that his father had constructed and listens to poems that 'Amr b. Yaḥyā al-Haythamī had composed concerning the revenge of al-Mukarram on the Najāḥids.

Idrīs reports that with the return of al-Mukarram to Ṣan'ā' at the end of the year 460/1068, there no longer remains opposition to his rule anywhere in Yaman. In this period the chief *qādī*

Lamak b. Mālik al-Ḥammādī is responsible for the teaching of Ismaili doctrines.

Idrīs notes that when the head of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī was brought to Zabīd by the forces of Sa‘īd b. Najāḥ, the poet ‘Uthmānī, a descendant of the caliph ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān, had composed poetry in praise of Sa‘īd and condemnation of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad. Thus, when al-Mukarram is victorious over the Najāḥids, he searches for the poet ‘Uthmānī and attempts to exact his revenge upon him. ‘Uthmānī wanders from place to place fearing the Ṣulayḥids. However, he cleverly names a son of his after ‘Imrān b. al-Faql al-Yāmī. An important official hears of the son of ‘Uthmānī and brings him to al-Mukarram to plead for clemency for his father. The young boy recites an ode (*qaṣīda*) for al-Mukarram that was written by his father, Uthmānī. After the completion of the poem, al-Mukarram informs him that his father had already passed away, for this poem was the last breath of ‘Uthmānī’s life. When the boy returns to his father he finds that he was, in fact, dead.

The death of Asmā’ bint Shihāb (p. 149)

Asmā’ bint Shihāb, the wife of the *dā‘ī* ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī and the mother of al-Mukarram, dies in the year 467/1074–75.

The decision to make Dhū Jibla the capital (p. 149)

Al-Ḥurra al-Malika al-Sayyida, the Ṣulayḥid, governs with her husband al-Malik al-Mukarram. When the affairs in Yaman are stable and the battles with the Najāḥids are concluded, al-Malika al-Sayyida desires that the capital of the Ṣulayḥids be moved from Ṣan‘ā’ to Dhū Jibla. She states that the location in Dhū Jibla offers better access to supplies and is more central with regard to the entire region of Yaman.

Al-Malika al-Sayyida asks her husband to gather the agents of the Ṣulayḥids in Ṣan‘ā’. He inspects the masses from the palace of Ghumdān. He declares that he sees only tribesmen carrying swords and lances in their hands. But when he examines the crowds in Dhū Jibla, he notices that all are carrying gifts. Therefore he

decides that it is better to live amongst the people of the region of Dhū Jibla. Al-Mukarram appoints 'Imrān b. al-Faql al-Yāmī and Abū Sa'ūd b. Asa'd b. Shihāb al-Şulayḥī as the local rulers of Şan'a'.

The illness of al-Mukarram (p. 150)

Al-Mukarram orders the construction of a fortress in Dhū Jibla named the 'House of Glory' (*dār al-'izz*). After several days in Dhū Jibla, he is struck with a paralysis (*fālij*). Idrīs says that perhaps this was the same illness that he had suffered while fighting the Najāḥīds in Zabīd. Al-Mukarram's doctors advise him to isolate himself from people. He retreats to the fortress of al-Ta'kar and gives control of the *da'wa* to his wife al-Malika al-Sayyida.

Supervision of the *da'wa* in India (p. 152)

The Imam al-MustaŒir places the *da'wa* in India (al-Hind) under the supervision of al-Malik al-Mukarram and al-Malika al-Sayyida. Al-MustaŒir, in a *sijill* dated Rabī' I 468/ October–November 1075, grants the Yamani *dā'i* authority to fulfil requests from the *dā'is* in India.

The death of al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (p. 152)

The chief *dā'i* of the Fatimids, al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, passes away in Cairo on 10 Shawwāl 470/26 April 1078. He is buried in the celebrated Dar al-'Ilm where he was a teacher.

Al-Malika al-Sayyida gains control of the *da'wa* in India (p. 153)

In a *sijill* dated 3 Dhu'l-Qa'da 481/4 February 1089, the Imam al-MustaŒir gives al-Malika al-Sayyida control over the *da'wa* in India. Al-MustaŒir begins by recounting the contents of a previous letter received from al-Malika al-Sayyida. She had informed the Imam al-MustaŒir in her letter about the death of the *dā'i* in India, Marzubān b. Işḥāq b. Marzubān. Al-MustaŒir states that since the *dā'i* left two sons, the eldest, Aḥmad, should take up the position of *dā'i*. He also refers to Ismā'il b. Ibrāhīm, the former *dā'i* in 'Umān, who had given up his service to the *da'wa* in favour of

commercial pursuits (*rakḍ fī ṭalab al-tijāra*), and that the community of believers there languishes in his absence. Al-Mustanṣir encourages al-Malika al-Sayyida to consider the affairs of these regions closely and to watch over the *da'wa* in them. He enjoins her to send embassies to these areas. They should carry messages of support to fortify the spirits of the masses and encourage the further spread of the *da'wa*.

During the residence of al-Mukarram in al-Ta'kar, because of his illness, the *qāḍī* 'Imrān b. al-Faḍl al-Yāmī attempts to visit him. The *qāḍī* is stopped at the gate of the fortress by those administering its affairs because of the large group with him. They instruct him to return to Dhū Jibla. He is angered by their actions and writes a poem recounting his past service with 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī and his important place in the Yamani *da'wa*.

The death of al-Mukarram Aḥmad (p. 156)

Al-Malik al-Mukarram dies in Jumādā I 477/September-October 1084, at the fortress of al-Ta'kar. Al-Malika al-Sayyida conceals his death for a certain amount of time.

In a *sijill* dated Rabī' I 478/June-July 1085, the Imam al-Mustanṣir confirms the appointment of the son of al-Mukarram, al-Mukarram al-Aṣghar 'Abd al-Mustanṣir 'Alī, as heir to the leadership of the Yamani *da'wa*. The letter begins with a long opening in which the Imam expresses his condolences and personal anguish at the loss of al-Mukarram. He states that he has ordered Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Jawharī personally to express his remorse to the son of al-Mukarram at the loss of his father.

A second *sijill* is sent by al-Mustanṣir to al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Muḥammad b. Malik al-Mukarram Aḥmad enjoining him to accede to his brother's rule. Al-Mustanṣir then encourages al-Malika al-Sayyida to act in her son's interest and to assist him in gaining the loyalty of the members of the *da'wa* in Yaman.

Elevation of the rank of al-Malika al-Sayyida to *ḥujja* (p. 161)

Idrīs reports that al-Malika al-Sayyida was held in special regard by the Imam al-Mustanṣir. He raises her in the ranks of the *da'wa*

to the rank of *ḥujja*.²⁴ Al-Mustanşir then commands the *dā'īs* to follow her orders and to rely on her support. Idrīs reports that al-Malika al-Sayyida was aided in the discharge of her tasks by the chief *dā'ī* and *qāḍī* in Yaman, Lamak b. Mālik, and by his son Yaḥyā. These two men function as the guarantors of the *sharī'a*. Nevertheless, they are obedient to al-Malika al-Sayyida concerning all matters pertaining to the *da'wa*.

Al-Malika al-Sayyida appoints the *amīr* Saba' b. Aḥmad b. Muẓaffar al-Şulayḥī as a regent (*nā'ib*) over her son, al-Mukarram al-Aşghar 'Abd al-Mustanşir 'Alī, who remains the titular ruler of Yaman.

Return of the Najāhids (p. 162)

The Najāhid leader, Jayyāsh b. Najāḥ, returns to Yaman from India where he had fled after the death of his brother Sa'īd b. Najāḥ. When he hears of the death of al-Mukarram and the passing of the rule to his wife, al-Malika al-Sayyida, he desires to restore the power of the Najāhids. Jayyāsh engages in a secret plot with 'Alī b. al-Qumm, the *wazīr* of the Şulayḥid governor in Zabīd. Jayyāsh gathers a large force and expels the Şulayḥid governor from the city.

The *amīr* Saba' b. Aḥmad al-Şulayḥī responds to Jayyāsh's actions in the city of Zabīd. He first moves to a fortress called Ashyaḥ located in the mountains in the proximity of Zabīd. In respect to rule over Zabīd, a curious situation results. When the weather is cool in the Tihāma, Jayyāsh retreats from the region and a large army of Şulayḥid troops descend from the mountains to control the city. During this period, Saba' collects the taxes (*al-kharāj*) from the region. He takes into account the taxes that Jayyāsh has levied in the summer and the fall, so that the inhabitants are not overburdened by his taxation. When the warm weather returns, the Şulayḥids retreat once again into the mountains and the city is left to the Najāhids. At times the Şulayḥids leave because of the strength of the Najāhid forces and at times because of the intensity of heat and the prevalence of disease during the summer months in the Tihāma.

The battle of al-Kazā'im (p. 164)

Idrīs reports that, fearing defeat at the hands of the Ṣulayḥids, Jayyāsh and his *wazīr* Khalaf b. Abi'l-Ṭāhir schemed against their enemies. They encouraged local notables to write letters to Saba' b. Aḥmad, convincing him of their loyalty. Meanwhile Jayyāsh has persuaded the most important notables of the Tihāma among both the Arabs and the Africans, including the powerful *sharīf* Yaḥyā b. Ḥamza b. Wahhās, to side with the Najāḥid forces.

When Aḥmad b. Saba' arrives in Zabīd, his army, numbering three thousand cavalry and ten thousand infantry, is defeated in a large battle at al-Kazā'im on 5 Dhu'l-Ḥijja 479/13 March 1087. Two members of the Ṣulayḥid family, Qays b. Aḥmad b. al-Muẓaffar al-Ṣulayḥī and Muḥammad b. al-Muhannā al-Ṣulayḥī, are killed in the battle. 'Imrān b. al-Faḍl al-Yāmī dies as a result of a spear wound received in single combat with the *sharīf* Yaḥyā b. Ḥamza b. Wahhās. The latter writes poetry boasting of his victory over 'Imrān b. al-Faḍl. Idrīs includes poems written by the *da'ī* Saba' b. Aḥmad b. Muẓaffar al-Ṣulayḥī apologizing for his loss to the Najāḥids, and by 'Abd Allāh b. Ya'lī al-Ṣulayḥī responding to the boasts of the *sharīf*.

The conflict between the Zawāḥids and the Ṣulayḥids (p. 166)

A conflict arises between Abū Ḥimyar Saba' b. Aḥmad al-Ṣulayḥī and 'Āmir b. Sulaymān al-Zawāḥī. Al-Malika al-Sayyida writes to the Imam al-Mustanṣir informing him of the problems in the Yamani *da'wa*. She asks him for his support for the righteous followers of the *da'wa*. In his *sijill* al-Mustanṣir replies that he has followed the situation between the two men from information supplied by the three messengers that al-Malika al-Sayyida had previously sent to him in Cairo. He insists that the actions of Saba' b. Aḥmad during this conflict are indicative of his level-headedness, his genuine intention and right belief. The Imam ends his letter by thanking Saba' b. Aḥmad for the noble attributes he has displayed.

Al-Mustanṣir sends another *sijill* to the Ṣulayḥid sultans, the Zawāḥids, the tribal leaders of the Ḥijāz and the believers in Yaman, dated Rabī' I 480/June-July 1087. He begins by praising the members of the *da'wa* in Yaman for their piety and adherence to

the principles of religion. He then warns them against discord (*ikhtilāf*) and reminds them of the pious example that 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī set in his service to the Imam and in his missionary activity in Yaman. Al-MustaŒir then notes that it was through the Imam that the headstrong Arabs of the region were brought under the control of the Ṣulayḥids. He then urges the leaders to obey al-Mukarram al-Aṣghar and his mother, al-Malika al-Sayyida. Idrīs remarks here that when the sultans and the *amīrs* listened to this letter, they heeded its warnings.

Al-Malika Sayyida becomes leader of the Yamani *da'wa* (p. 173)

The brother of the ruler of Yaman, al-Malik al-MuẒaffar 'Abd al-Imām Muḥammad b. Malik al-Mukarram, dies. Then, tragically, the young ruler of Yaman himself, al-Mukarram al-Aṣghar, passes away also. Thus, al-Malika al-Sayyida becomes the sole ruler of Yaman on behalf of the Fatimids.

The *amīr* Abū Ḥimyar Saba' b. Aḥmad al-Ṣulayḥī (p. 174)

Al-Ḥurra al-Malika al-Sayyida promotes Abū Ḥimyār Saba' b. Aḥmad b. MuẒaffar al-Ṣulayḥī to an important position in the *da'wa*. Idrīs states that there were several reports that he desired to marry al-Malika al-Sayyida. The story Idrīs recounts is that he sent two messengers to the Imam al-MustaŒir asking him to intercede on his behalf and, in the course of the official correspondence with al-Malika al-Sayyida, requested her to marry him.

A man from Cairo, Yamīn al-Dawla, arrives with the messengers of Saba' b. Aḥmad to al-Malika al-Sayyida while she is in the Ṣulayḥid capital of Dhū Jibla. Yamīn al-Dawla reads to her a letter in which she is promised in marriage by the Imam al-MustaŒir to Saba' b. Aḥmad for a dowry of a hundred thousand *dīnārs*, and the equivalent of fifty thousand *dīnārs* of other fine goods. She responds affirmatively quoting from the Qur'ān. Saba' b. Aḥmad arrives at Dhū Jibla with his armies and is impressed with her. However, he spends only one night in the palace of Dhū Jibla and then returns to al-Ashyaḥ.

Lamak b. Malik and his son Yaḥyā b. Lamak (p. 177)

Idrīs affirms that the two persons most responsible for supervising the *da'wa* in Yaman were the chief *qāḍī* Lamak b. Mālik al-Ḥammādī and his son Yaḥyā. Idrīs states that during their lifetimes the two men rose to positions of high esteem because of their crucial roles.

The remainder of the history of the Imam al-Mustanṣir (p. 177)

Idrīs now returns to describing the events of the reign of the Imam al-Mustanṣir in Cairo. He reports that after the elimination of Ibn Ḥamdān, Asad al-Dawla was placed in command of the Turkish and other army contingents. However, Asad al-Dawla begins to demand money from the state. When his behaviour can no longer be tolerated, al-Mustanṣir orders his arrest and execution.

Idrīs says that al-Mustanṣir then wrote to Badr al-Jamālī, the *Amīr al-Juyūsh* (Commander of the Armies), who was at that time in 'Akkā' (Acre), Syria.

Badr al-Jamālī in Egypt at the height of his power (p. 179)

When he receives the letter of al-Mustanṣir, Badr al-Jamālī mobilizes his forces to travel to Cairo. He places his armies and their equipment onto ships and heads towards Egypt. Badr first lands at Tinnīs, where the common people and the elites are in rebellion. The forces of Badr encounter the Lawāta Berbers, former partisans of Ibn Ḥamdān. Badr's troops seize horses and camels from this nomadic tribe. He then marches toward Alexandria and the adjacent regions in the Delta.

Badr al-Jamālī arrives in Cairo on 28 Jumādā I (or II) 467/19 January 1075 or 18 February 1075. The Imam al-Mustanṣir immediately goes forth to meet Badr and presents him with money and robes of honour. He makes Badr al-Jamālī his *wazīr* and adds to the list of his titles the epithet 'Sword of Islam' (*sayf al-Islām*).

Badr al-Jamālī's presence in Cairo brings security and order to Fatimid Egypt. Taxes are collected and delivered to the palace of the Imam. He also proceeds to Upper Egypt, where he launches a similar campaign to restore order.

During this period, Atsiz, a Turkoman commander, invades Syria. His troops then turn their march toward Egypt. The *amīr* Badr b. Ḥāzim, the leader of the tribe of Ṭayy', arrives in Cairo to meet with al-MustaŒsir and volunteers his men to fight for the Fatimids against the Turkoman invasion.

The troops of Atsiz arrive at the village of Ṣahrajat in the proximity of Cairo. Al-MustaŒsir marches out of the gates of Cairo and orders Badr al-Jamālī and Badr b. Ḥāzim al-Ṭā'ī to engage in battle with the enemy. The Turkoman force is defeated by the Fatimid army.

In the month of Muḥarram 479/April–May 1086, the Imam raises the rank of the son of Badr al-Jamālī, al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh, thereby ensuring the son's future leadership in the state. In a *siġill* from al-MustaŒsir, al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh is referred to with the following titles: 'The Most sublime, the Preferred, the Sword of the Imam, the Beauty of Islam, the Noblest of mankind, the Conquerer for religion, the Friend of the Commander of the Faithful (*al-ajall al-afḍal sayf al-imām jamāl al-Islām sharaf al-anām nāṣir al-dīn khalīl amīr al-mu'minīn*).' Idrīs states that while al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh became learned in political affairs and the administration of the army, Badr al-Jamālī was concerned with the wisdom and learning of the Imams. Idrīs describes this period as one in which the affairs of state are put right and the masses are pleased.

The death of the Imam al-MustaŒsir (p. 185)

The Imam al-MustaŒsir dies on the morning of 18 Dhu'l-Ḥijja 487/29 December 1094, at the age of sixty-seven years. Idrīs hints that his death might have been caused by poison.

The Reign of al-Musta'li bi'llāh

The birth of al-Musta'li (p. 187)

Al-Musta'li Abu'l-Qāsim Aḥmad was the third son of al-MustaŒsir. When Aḥmad was born, al-MustaŒsir informed the entire *da'wa* membership of this event. Idrīs includes the *siġill* that al-MustaŒsir sent to al-Mukarram Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Ṣulayḥī announcing the birth

of his son. The letter states that the boy was born in the month of Muḥarram 467/August–September 1074.

The succession of al-Must‘alī (p. 191)

Idrīs reports that a royal bearing and signs of leadership were already visible in the stature of the young prince Aḥmad. He was raised in the same manner as the previous Fatimid caliphs. When he reaches adolescence, al-Mustansīr marries Aḥmad to the daughter of Badr al-Jamālī, Sitt al-Mulk. He is also placed on the right hand of his father and declared his successor (*walī al-‘ahd al-mu’minīn*). After al-Mustansīr passes away, Aḥmad receives the oath of allegiance and assumes the title al-Musta‘li bi’llāh on 18 Dhu’l-Ḥijja 487/29 December 1094. He is twenty-one years old when he becomes the Fatimid caliph.

The death of Badr al-Jamālī (p. 195)

Idrīs records the date of death of Badr al-Jamālī as 488/1095.²⁵ He is described as a loyal supporter of the Imams. Upon his death, his son al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh is appointed *wazīr*.

The Musta‘li-Nizārī schism (p. 196)

Al-Mustansīr’s son, Nizār, revolts when he realizes that the multitude has agreed upon the rule of his younger brother al-Musta‘li. When al-Musta‘li learns of Nizār’s opposition, he meets him to persuade him of his claim as the rightful successor of al-Mustansīr.

However, Nizār leaves Cairo in the middle of the night for Alexandria with a group of young boys and servants. He appears in Alexandria where he gains the support of Aftakīn, one of the *mamlūks* of Badr al-Jamālī. In describing these and subsequent events, Idrīs is very critical of the followers of Nizār, accusing them of violating the traditions (*sunna*) of the Prophet and the religious law (*sharī‘a*).

When the *wazīr* al-Afḍal desires to use military force against Nizār and his followers, al-Musta‘li cautions him against taking such an action, instructing him rather to dictate a treatise containing proofs against Nizār’s claims. Letters are sent to Nizār, but

they do not produce a result. When Nizār proceeds to Kawm al-Rish near Cairo, al-Musta‘lī advances from the palace with a group of twenty-five horsemen and confronts Nizār. This causes the supporters of Nizār to desert him and he retreats from Cairo. A strong army under the leadership of al-Musta‘lī and the *wazīr* al-Afḍal finally capture Nizār and Aftakīn. The two men are taken to the caliphal palace as prisoners.

Idrīs includes a *siġill*, dated 8 Šafar 489/6 February, 1096, written by the mother of al-Musta‘lī, al-Ḥurra al-Malika, to al-Ḥurra al-Malika al-Sayyida of Yaman narrating the events of the Nizārī schism. She asserts her son’s claims to be the rightful successor to al-Mustaṣfir by designation (*naṣṣ*). She writes that al-Musta‘lī acted with forbearance with Nizār, pleading with him to abandon his revolt. Likewise, Idrīs describes al-Musta‘lī as restraining the *wazīr* al-Afḍal’s ‘yearning to uproot the Nizārī opposition.’

In her letter, al-Ḥurra al-Malika continues that when Nizār reaches Kawm al-Rish, al-Musta‘lī gives al-Afḍal permission to meet the forces of Nizār in battle. The caliph himself also prepares to do battle with the troops of Nizār who are said to number more than thirty thousand. The conflict is heated and great numbers of Nizār’s troops are killed and captured. When the battle ends, Aftakīn and Nizār flee to Alexandria. Al-Afḍal then lays siege to that city, attempting to surround it both by land and sea. But since these hostilities coincide with the beginning of the month of Ramaḍān, the forces of al-Afḍal do not engage Nizār.

After the month of Ramaḍān is over, the soldiers of al-Afḍal use mangonels (*manāġīk*) to lay seige to Nizār’s forces. The followers of Nizār then surrender to al-Afḍal’s troops asking to be granted protection, and Aftakīn and Nizār are captured. The letter of al-Ḥurra al-Malika concludes with much praise for al-Musta‘lī. Finally the mother of al-Musta‘lī reminds al-Malika al-Sayyida of the important station that she holds in the *da‘wa*.

As a result of his actions in defiance of al-Musta‘lī, Nizār is killed immediately. However, Idrīs admits that in many regions Nizār’s supporters continue to believe in his imamate and support his *da‘wa*. The Nizārīs are divided into two groups. In the first place there are some who allege that Nizār was still alive and will not die

until he spreads justice throughout the earth. Another group admit that Nizār was killed but that he had a son in Khurāsān, or that a son was born in the presence of Ḥasan b. al-Ṣabbāḥ. Idrīs maintains that all of these groups are incorrect and accuses the Nizārīs of engaging in all sorts of illicit activities.

Idrīs also describes the visit of a Nizārī *dā'ī* to the fortress of Shibām in Yaman in the year 839/1435–6. The missionary was from Samarqand where, according to him, there was a large Ismaili community of Nizārīs. Idrīs recounts how the Nizārī *dā'ī* met with the Ṭayyibī scholars of Yaman and he describes the differences in their doctrines. Idrīs categorically rejects the position of the Nizārīs on a number of points.

The Musta'li *da'wa* in Yaman (p. 213)

During the reign of al-Musta'li, his *dā'īs* are sent to all of the regions of the earth. He is concerned with establishing and ensuring the growth of Ismaili communities in every city and province. Al-Musta'li appoints al-Malika al-Sayyida and the chief *dā'ī* and *qāḍī* Yaḥyā b. Lamak b. Mālīk al-Ḥammadī as leaders of the Yamani *da'wa*.

The death of Saba' al-Ṣulayḥī and Sulaymān al-Zawāḥī (p. 214)

In 491/1097–8, the *dā'ī* Saba' b. Aḥmad al-Ṣulayḥī dies. In the following year, 492/1098–9, 'Amir b. Sulaymān b. 'Abd Allāh al-Zawāḥī also passes away. Idrīs states that these two figures were important individuals who held a high rank in the Yamani *da'wa*.

Al-Mufaḍḍal b. Abi'l-Barakāt al-Ḥimyarī (p. 214)

Al-Malika al-Sayyida appoints al-Mufaḍḍal b. Abi'l-Barakāt b. al-Walīd al-Ḥimyarī to prosecute the war against the Najāḥīds in Zabīd and other rebellious groups. He is placed in charge of the fortress al-Ta'kar after the death of al-Mukarram. Al-Malika al-Sayyida ascends to al-Ta'kar and lives there during the summer months. When the weather becomes cold she returns to the capital of Dhū Jibla.

Al-Mufaḍḍal engages in several battles with 'Amr b. 'Arfaza al-

Janabī and others from the tribe of Sanḥān and the regions of ‘Ans and Zabīd. He also attacks the Banū Zuray‘ of ‘Adan and forces them to pay half of their tax (*kharāj*) to al-Malika al-Sayyida. Idrīs includes a report which estimates that half the annual tax of ‘Adan equals fifty thousand *dīnārs*.

The remainder of the account of al-Musta‘lī (p. 216)

The armies of the Crusaders attack Damascus and Syria where many of the inhabitants are killed. Idrīs reports that the majority of those killed are the followers of Nizār. Al-Musta‘lī sends a large army against the Crusaders. According to Idrīs, the Crusaders are defeated and retreat from Syria.

When al-Musta‘lī is certain of his own death, he calls his loyal supporters and designates his son al-Manṣūr as his rightful successor with the regnal title al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh. Al-Musta‘lī then sends *sijillāt* to the other members of the *da‘wa* living in different communities.

Al-Musta‘lī passed away in the beginning of 495/1101. His reign lasted seven years.

The Reign of al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh

The accession of al-Āmir (p. 218)

Al-Āmir assumes the Musta‘lī imamate in 495/1101 on the day that his father dies.²⁶ After he receives the oath of allegiance (*bay‘a*) from his supporters, he writes to the distant regions of *da‘wa* informing its members of the death of al-Musta‘lī and of his own designation as successor. Al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh is his *wazīr*, while the chief *da‘ī* is Abu’l-Barakāt b. Bishrā al-Ḥalabī.

Bahrām, a Nizārī *da‘ī* in Syria, gathers a large army and seizes the city of Damascus. Al-Āmir orders a group of horsemen to face Bahrām in battle in Syria. When they meet Bahrām accompanied by his soldiers in battle outside Damascus, they defeat him and return to Cairo bearing his head.

The Crusader armies reach Damascus but are repulsed by the

forces of al-Afḍal who take weapons, equipment and prisoners from them. In Egypt, the tribe of Sinbis threatens Cairo. The inhabitants close the gates of the city in response to this threat. The Imam himself assists in delivering the city from this danger. Idrīs states that al-Āmir is himself the author of the epistle entitled ‘The Noble Guidance’ (*al-Hidāya al-Sharīfa*).²⁷ This treatise is an attempt to demonstrate the validity of the imamate of al-Musta‘lī and deny the rights of those who claim the imamate of Nizār.

The *da‘wa* of al-Āmir in Yaman and revolt of the Jurists

(pp. 231–232)

When al-Manṣūr b. Jayyāsh is expelled from Zabīd, his brother ‘Abd al-Wāḥid b. Jayyāsh takes control of the city. Desiring military support against his brother, al-Manṣūr b. Jayyāsh proceeds to the fortress of al-Ta‘kar. He offers al-Mufaḍḍal a fourth of the taxes of the city of Zabīd for his aid in removing his brother, ‘Abd al-Wāḥid, from Zabīd. With the support of al-Mufaḍḍal’s troops, al-Manṣūr b. Jayyāsh is able to retake the city of Zabīd.

After the conquest of Zabīd, al-Mufaḍḍal remains in the Tihāma. A group of jurists (*fuqahā’*) belonging to the Shāfi‘ī school (*madhhab*) plot a rebellion against the deputy of al-Mufaḍḍal in al-Ta‘kar. They proclaim a man by the name of Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Zaydān as their Imam. In the course of their revolt, the fortress is set ablaze. Eventually the rebels manage to take control of the fortress of al-Ta‘kar.

Al-Mufaḍḍal learns of the revolt while he is in the Tihāma. He then heads directly to the Jabal al-Ta‘kar and lays siege to the fortress. The rebel leader, Ibrāhīm b. Zaydān, declares that he would be prepared to face death only after killing al-Mufaḍḍal. He then orders the concubines of al-Mufaḍḍal (*sarayā*) to wear their finest clothing. They are then sent out on to the roof of the fortress where they play tambourines. Al-Mufaḍḍal was a proud and honourable man and the sight of his concubines dancing in public killed him. His death occurs in Ramaḍān 504/March-April 1111.

When al-Malika al-Sayyida hears of the death of al-Mufaḍḍal, she quickly proceeds to the fortress of al-Ta‘kar. She sends messengers to the jurists offering them a settlement. Finally she

convinces them to return control of the fortress back to the Ṣulayḥids. Al-Malika al-Sayyida reportedly makes a payment of twenty-five thousand *dīnārs* to Ibrāhīm b. Zaydān, in addition to what she pays to his companions.

Ibn Najīb al-Dawla (p. 233)

In the year 513/1119–20, Ibn Najīb al-Dawla²⁸ comes to Yaman from Cairo, and al-Malika al-Sayyida places the command of the army and the populace under his control. Idrīs reports that he had a prodigious memory, was knowledgeable concerning Ismaili law and an expert in the recitation of the Qur'ān. He arrives in Yaman in the company of twenty cavalymen from the elite Ḥujariyya division of the Fatimid army.

Ibn Najīb al-Dawla first proceeds on a campaign in the Wādī Maytam. He then marches to Zabīd and the coastal regions. He enlists three hundred cavalymen from Banū Hamās and Banū Sanḥān. Idrīs reports that as a result of his appearance in Yaman rebellious elements were suppressed, the prices of goods decreased, and justice and law prevailed.

The death of al-Afḍal b. Badr al-Jamālī (p. 235)

At the end of Ramaḍān 515/December 1121, al-Afḍal b. Badr al-Jamālī dies. Idrīs first quotes from the biographical dictionary of Ibn Khallikān, *The Deaths of the Notables (Wafayāt al-ʿayān)*,²⁹ which states that al-Afḍal was killed as he passed from his home in Fuṣṭāṭ in the direction of the Nile. Idrīs also quotes the historian Ibn Zāfir al-Azdī who reports that al-Afḍal possessed at the time of his death over one million *dīnārs*, as well as many fine linens, jewels, livestock and other expensive goods. Ibn Khallikān alleges that the Imam al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh ordered the assassination of al-Afḍal because of his excessive power in the state.

Idrīs notes a report from the *dāʿī* Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥāmīdī that perhaps might correct Ibn Khallikān's account. It describes how al-Afḍal envied the *dāʿī* Abu'l-Barakāt b. Bishrā and wanted to kill him. When al-Āmir discovered this fact, he placed Abu'l-Barakāt in the palace where he was able to write and teach

in the service of the *da'wa* in secret. When Abu'l-Barakāt dies, servants from the palace inform al-Afḍal that the *dā'i* had not left the palace. Al-Afḍal is puzzled by this and does not understand how it can be possible. The following morning he comes upon the funeral procession carrying the body of the *dā'i*. After following the procession, he discovers the fate of Abu'l-Barakāt. Angered, al-Afḍal confronts the Imam al-Āmir, reproaching him for concealing the *dā'i* in the palace. Al-Āmir responds to him saying: 'We learned of your enmity toward Abu'l-Barakāt b. Bishrā, and your service demanded that you not be hostile towards him. He also had a service to perform.' The Imam said this because of the haughtiness and arrogance of al-Afḍal.

Al-Ma'mūn al-Baṭā'ihī becomes *wazīr* (p. 238)

Al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh appoints Abū Maṣū' Jawāmard al-Āmirī as *wazīr* with the title of al-Ma'mūn.³⁰ Idrīs reproduces 'Umāra al-Yamani's report that al-Ma'mūn had given support to Ibn Najīb al-Dawla in Yaman. The *wazīr* gives Ibn Najīb unlimited authority and sends him four hundred Armenian archers and seven hundred African troops. Ibn Najīb settles in al-Janad where he directs his attention to the hostility of the local tribal leaders, Sulaymān and 'Imrān b. al-Zar, Maṣū' b. al-Mufaḍḍal b. Abi'l-Barakāt, Saba' b. Abi'l-Sa'ūd and Mufaḍḍal b. Zurī'.

In the year 518/1124–5, Ibn Najīb al-Dawla invades Zabīd. The ruler of Zabīd is Mann Allāh al-Fātikī. Ibn Najīb falls from his mount during the battle and his horse runs away from Zabīd. However, the forces of the tribe of Hamdān support his troops in battle and he is rescued. The horse of Ibn Najīb returns to al-Janad, prompting those in al-Janad to spread the rumour that Ibn Najīb was killed in Zabīd. 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm arrives in al-Janad and proceeds to Dhū Jibla. He requests money and men from al-Malika al-Sayyida. He then campaigns against the Najāḥids and other hostile groups.

Ibn Najīb al-Dawla is surrounded by the local leaders 'Imrān b. al-Zar, Maṣū' b. al-Mufaḍḍal b. Abi'l-Barakāt, Saba' b. Abi'l-Sa'ūd and Mufaḍḍal b. Zurī' in the city of al-Janad. Meanwhile Ibn Najīb

and al-Malika al-Sayyida are in conflict with each other over doctrinal issues.

Despite their differences, Ibn Najīb al-Dawla requests aid from al-Malika al-Sayyida. She responds first by writing to ‘Amr b. ‘Arfaṭa al-Janabī, whom she uses as an envoy to the tribes of the area. She makes a payment to the tribal leaders of the region of ten thousand Egyptian *mithqāls*. Meanwhile she tells messengers to spread the rumour that Ibn Najīb has divided among his army ten thousand Egyptian *dīnārs*. When the tribes besieging Ibn Najīb hear this, they immediately demand just compensation from their leaders. Unable to provide these amounts, the leaders return to their villages and the tribal forces besieging Ibn Najīb al-Dawla are disbanded. Afterwards Ibn al-Najīb returns to Dhū Jibla and apologizes to al-Malika al-Sayyida for his statements.

Ibn Najīb al-Dawla remains in Yaman until a letter arrives from the Imam al-Āmir requesting his return to Cairo. However, several of his enemies conspire with the captain of the small boat (*al-jalba*) in which he returns to Cairo. He is drowned in the Red Sea along with the secretary of al-Malika al-Sayyida, Ibn al-Azdī. Idrīs adds that there were rumours that Ibn Najīb was spreading the Nizārī *da‘wa* in Yaman. However, al-Malika al-Sayyida denied these accusations concerning Ibn Najīb al-Dawla.

‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṣulayḥī (p. 243)

Al-Malika al-Sayyida appoints ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī, the nephew of the *dā‘ī* ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī, to the chief military position in the Ṣulayḥid state. Idrīs includes a poem in praise of ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh by Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ‘Imrān.

Al-Dhu‘ayb b. Mūsā al-Wādī‘ī (p. 245)

Al-Malika al-Sayyida and Yaḥyā b. Lamak al-Ḥammādī select al-Dhu‘ayb b. Mūsā al-Wādī‘ī³¹ as the *dā‘ī* and successor of Yaḥyā b. Lamak in the *da‘wa* of Yaman. He is portrayed as a humble and pious man by Idrīs, not abusing the favour granted to him by his

high position in the *da'wa*. Idrīs reports that at this time there was obedience to the *da'wa* in Yaman.

The death of Yaḥyā b. Lamak (p. 246)

In Jumādā II 520/June-July 1126, the chief *dā'ī* of Yaman, Yaḥyā b. Lamak al-Ḥammādī, dies.

The birth and designation of al-Ṭayyib (p. 247)

Al-Malika al-Sayyida is informed in a *sijill* of the birth of al-Ṭayyib b. al-Āmir, who is proclaimed the successor of his father al-Āmir. She notifies all of her followers in Yaman of the letter's contents and spreads news of al-Ṭayyib's designation (*naṣṣ*) as the successor of al-Āmir. She continues to manage the affairs of the *da'wa* in Yaman with al-Dhu'ayb b. Mūsā al-Wādī'ī.

Al-Āmir sends the *sharīf* Muḥammad b. Ḥaydara to Yaman with letters and a tattered garment to be given to al-Malika al-Sayyida. Muḥammad b. Ḥaydara is surprised at the order of the Imam to deliver this ordinary item to al-Malika al-Sayyida. Nevertheless he places the garment amongst his clothing. Upon his arrival in Yaman, he forgets to deliver the item to al-Malika al-Sayyida. But when he finally remembers to take it to her, she is drowned in tears at the sight of the garment. She states that, by means of this item of clothing, the Imam al-Āmir was announcing to her his own death.

The death of al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh (p. 249)

Idrīs states that al-Āmir began to suggest his imminent death to his closest companions. He describes the manner in which the Imam once asked for an apple to be brought to him. He declares that inside of the apple there is a 'seed that is fresh and radiant,' and with this statement he removes the seed. He then asks for two knives and plunges them into the apple. He then says to those who are present: 'Indeed this is like me, for I shall be taken from you and iron shall fall upon me as you have just seen.' Idrīs also relates a story in which the Imam predicts his death to the *dā'ī* Abū Fakhr in a rhyme.

On 3 Dhu'l-Qa'da 526/15 September 1132,³² al-Āmir makes his way through the streets in a large procession and is killed. A Nizārī *fidā'i* jumps from a minaret to distract those who were protecting the Imam. His other Nizārī companions then fall upon al-Āmir and stab him with their knives.

Al-Āmir is carried to the palace by his [cousin] 'Abd al-Majīd. Recognizing that his death is approaching, the Imam orders that his closest friends, companions and loyalists be brought into his presence. When they arrive, he renews the designation (*naṣṣ*) of his son, al-Ṭayyib, and orders that the oath of allegiance be given to al-Ṭayyib. Al-Āmir places 'Abd al-Majīd in the role of protector (*ḥāfīz*) of the imamate, after he has sworn allegiance to al-Ṭayyib. Al-Āmir then calls forth Ibn Madyan who holds the rank of *bāb* in the *da'wa* and asks him to serve al-Ṭayyib. He informs Ibn Madyan that he would also be killed. He instructs him to appoint his son-in-law (*ṣihr*) as his own successor as the next *bāb*, and orders that he should also be placed in the service of al-Ṭayyib.

The Reign of al-Ṭayyib b. al-Āmir

The *sijill* of al-Āmir about al-Ṭayyib (p. 253)

Idrīs states that al-Ṭayyib was born in Cairo. His father, al-Āmir, taught him the doctrines of the Imams. When al-Āmir learns that his death is imminent, he writes letters announcing the birth of al-Ṭayyib and his designation (*naṣṣ*) of al-Ṭayyib as his successor.

Idrīs then includes a copy of the *sijill* that the Imam al-Āmir sent to al-Malika al-Sayyida. The letter is undated. The birth of al-Ṭayyib is recorded in the letter as 4 Rabi' II 524/17 March 1130. The letter urges al-Malika al-Sayyida to spread the news of al-Ṭayyib's birth throughout Yaman.

Al-Ḥurra al-Malika al-Sayyida informs all the missionaries (*dā'īs*) in Yaman of the birth of al-Ṭayyib. She instructs them to spread the news of the designation of al-Ṭayyib as the rightful successor of his father, the Imam al-Āmir.

Mourning the death of al-Āmir (pp. 257–258)

When news of the death of al-Āmir and the succession of al-Ṭayyib reaches Yaman, al-Malika al-Sayyida and al-Dhu'ayb b. Mūsā al-Wādī'ī swear an oath of allegiance to al-Ṭayyib. During a reading of the 'sessions of noble wisdom' (*majālis al-ḥikma al-sharīfa*), al-Malika al-Sayyida orders that prayers be performed for the deceased Imam al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh.

Idrīs says that the *sharīf* al-Sayyid al-Fāḍil Muḥammad b. Ḥaydara al-Ḥusaynī remained in Yaman after his embassy to al-Malika al-Sayyida, and he includes the speech (*khutba*) that the *sharīf* made in mourning for the death of al-Āmir. The *sharīf* identifies al-Ṭayyib as the next Imam. 'Abd al-Majīd al-Ḥāfiẓ is mentioned as the regent (*walī al-'ahd*) and Abū 'Alī Aḥmad b. al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh³³ as his *wazīr*. The speech concludes with praise for al-Malika al-Sayyida. Idrīs includes several poems that Muḥammad b. Ḥaydara al-Ḥusaynī wrote in mourning for the Imam al-Āmir.

The concealment of al-Ṭayyib (p. 265)

Ibn Madyan remains the head of the Ṭayyibī *da'wa* in Egypt, while al-Malika al-Sayyida and al-Dhu'ayb b. Mūsā al-Wādī'ī are its representatives in Yaman. Idrīs notes that 'Abd al-Majīd al-Ḥāfiẓ was the regent (*walī al-'ahd*) of the Imam. According to Idrīs, 'Abd al-Majīd did not take the title of Imam until the *wazīr* Abū 'Alī Aḥmad b. al-Afḍal Kutayfāt attempted to take over Egypt. In this uncertain and dangerous period, the faithful fear for the safety of al-Ṭayyib and place him in hiding.

Idrīs reports that the Imam al-Āmir had informed his followers that after him there would occur unjust events. He advised his followers that preparations be made for travel and the gathering of provisions. When al-Āmir is murdered and Ibn al-Afḍal turns against the Ismailis in enmity, the loyal followers of the al-Ṭayyib take the young Imam and other members of the *da'wa* into hiding. The *qāḍī* Abū 'Alī, the nephew of Ibn Madyan, is among those who go into concealment with the Imam al-Ṭayyib. Only those followers closest to al-Ṭayyib know the place where he is concealed.

Idrīs states that the period of concealment (*al-satr*) that began with the Imam al-Ṭayyib still continued in his own time. He insists

that the imamate will remain in the line of al-Ṭayyib and of his successors until the Day of Resurrection (*yawm al-qiyāma*).

The Ṭayyibī *da'wa* in Egypt³⁴ (p. 267)

The *dā'ī* Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥusayn reports that a select group of missionaries (*dā'īs*) were appointed by the Imam al-Āmir during his lifetime. The Imam designated Ibn Madyan as the ranking authority (*ṣāhib al-rutba*), along with this small group of other missionaries, Ibn Raslān, al-ʿAzīzī, Qūnaṣ and Naslān, as his most trusted supporters. During a visit of this group to the Imam, al-Āmir makes the statement that these missionaries would be his only defenders.

When the members of the group ask Ibn Madyan the meaning of this expression, he responds that the Imam would be murdered, and that Ibn al-Afḍal Kutayfāt will take control of Egypt. Moreover, he will make anti-Shi'ism (*dīn al-naṣb*) the state religion and will persecute the supporters (*al-awliyā*) of the Ismaili Imam and send them into exile. Ibn al-Afḍal will ask the four *dā'īs* to either abjure the Imam al-Ṭayyib or be killed. The four will resist him and remain loyal to al-Ṭayyib. Naslān, al-ʿAzīzī and Raslān will be killed, while Qūnaṣ will flee to Yaman but will be killed later. Ibn al-Madyan predicts that the day after the death of al-ʿAzīzī, he will also be killed. When they ask Ibn Madyan about the next Imam, he replies that it will be 'the seventh one, al-Ṭayyib, who will be hidden.' He adds that his 'brother-in-law' will go into hiding with al-Ṭayyib as the 'holder of the rank' (*ṣāhib al-rutba*).

Idrīs reports that after the death of al-Āmir and the concealment of al-Ṭayyib, the *wazīr* Ibn al-Afḍal Kutayfāt assumed power in Egypt, aided by al-Ḥasan b. ʿAbd al-Majīd. The latter places his father, ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Ḥāfīz, the regent of al-Ṭayyib, in prison and persecutes the adherents of the Imam. According to the predictions of Ibn Madyan, the most prominent *dā'īs* in the state are martyred, while the *qāḍī* Abū ʿAlī receives the position of highest authority from Ibn Madyan.

Idrīs then says that when the injustice (*al-jawr*) of Ibn al-Afḍal Kutayfāt became manifest, the people of Cairo revolted against him and killed him. They released ʿAbd al-Majīd from prison and

imprisoned his son al-Ḥasan. However, huge crowds from the army and inhabitants of the city gathered outside the gates of the palace demanding that al-Ḥasan be put to death. The crowds were silenced only when they learned of his execution.

When ‘Abd al-Majīd is restored to power, he declares himself to be the Imam. Idrīs maintains that he raised himself up to an office of which he was not worthy and assumed a high rank that he did not deserve. Before he assumed the imamate, he wrote to al-Malika al-Sayyida using the title, ‘The Regent of the Muslims and the Nephew of the Commander of the Faithful.’ After ‘Abd al-Majīd’s assumption of the imamate (under the regal title of al-Ḥāfiẓ li-Dīn Allāh), he claimed to be ‘the Commander of the Faithful’ (*amīr al-mu’minīn*). Responding to his change in titles, al-Malika al-Sayyida states that he is not worthy of the imamate.

The Majīdiyya *da‘wa* (p. 271)

In this period, the *qādī* al-Rashīd Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. Zubayr al-Ghassānī comes to Yaman as a missionary for ‘Abd al-Majīd al-Ḥāfiẓ and converts many of the tribal leaders to his cause. Idrīs notes here that the *da‘wa* of al-Majīdiyya³⁵ was no longer extant in Yaman in his day.

‘Abd al-Majīd al-Ḥāfiẓ appoints Saba’ b. Abi’l-Sa‘ūd al-Zuray‘ī al-Jushamī al-Hamdānī, the ruler of ‘Adan, to be the *dā‘ī* of Yaman. Idrīs insists that Saba’ b. Abi’l-Sa‘ūd only outwardly supported the doctrines of al-Ḥāfiẓ, desiring to protect his control over the port of ‘Adan. In actuality he was a supporter of the Imam al-Ṭayyib. Idrīs quotes the fifth *dā‘ī muṭlaq* of Yaman, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Walīd al-Qurashī (612/1215), who states that al-Malika al-Sayyida did not openly reject the request by Saba’ b. Abi’l-Sa‘ūd to follow the *da‘wa* of al-Ḥāfiẓ. Rather she denied him an answer in the very same manner in which ‘Alī b. Abi Ṭālib behaved during the caliphate of ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān.

The Zuray‘ids (p. 274)

Idrīs recounts the manner in which the Banū Zuray‘ gained sovereignty over ‘Adan and the surrounding region.³⁶ The Banū Ma‘n

were the local rulers of ‘Adan before the rise of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī. When the Ṣulayḥīds came to power, he placed them in control of the city of ‘Adan and the adjacent areas. However, following the death of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī, the Banū Ma‘n attempted to revolt against the Ṣulayḥīds. Therefore al-Mukarram went to the south of Yaman, removed the Banū Ma‘n and placed the Zuray‘ids in power. Idrīs then lists the Zuray‘id rulers of the city of ‘Adan as follows:

1. Zuray‘ b. al-‘Abbās b. al-Kurram in Takr ‘Adan, who protects the land route to ‘Adan, and Mas‘ūd b. Misma‘ b. al-Kurram ruler of the fortress of al-Khaḍra’, who guards the coast. Both men are martyred in Zabīd fighting with Mufaḍḍal b. Abi’l-Barakāt.
2. Abu’l-Sa‘ūd b. Zuray‘ and Abu’l-Ghārāt b. Mas‘ūd
3. Muḥammad b. Abi’l-Ghārāt
4. ‘Alī b. Abi’l-Ghārāt

Idrīs reports that the sons of Abu’l-Ghārāt, ‘Alī and Muḥammad, provoked Saba’ b. Abi’l-Sa‘ūd al-Zuray‘ī into rising against their unjust rule. The two groups engage in battle, and the forces of the Banū Hamdān support the side of al-Zuray‘ī after he pays them large sums of money. With this large force he conquers ‘Adan and subsequently dies in the year 533/1138–9.

The son of al-Zuray‘ī, ‘Alī b. Saba’, takes control of the city of ‘Adan after his father’s death. His brother Muḥammad b. Saba’ flees from ‘Adan to the fortress of al-Ta‘kar, which is under the rule of Manṣūr b. al-Mufaḍḍal b. Abi’l-Barakāt. When he dies, Muḥammad b. Saba’ becomes the ruler of ‘Adan. When the *qāḍī* al-Makanī al-Rashīd arrives in ‘Adan in 534/1139–1140, he enlists Muḥammad in the Ḥafīzī *da‘wa* instead of his brother ‘Alī b. Saba’.

In 535/1140–1141, Muḥammad b. Saba’ kills ‘Alī b. Abi’l-Ghārāt and takes control of the two fortresses in al-Lahaj to which he fled after he was expelled from the fortress of al-Khaḍrā’ in ‘Adan. Muḥammad b. Saba’ purchases the fortresses of al-Ta‘kar and Dhū Jibla and the treasures stored there from Manṣūr b. Mufaḍḍal b. Abi’l-Barakāt.

When Muḥammad b. Saba' dies, 'Imrān b. Muḥammad becomes the ruler of 'Adan and is enlisted in the *da'wa* of al-Ḥāfiẓ, during the period of the wazīrate of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ in Egypt 549–556/1154–1161. 'Imrān b. Muḥammad dies in 560/1164–5. His sons, Abū Sa'ūd and Muḥammad are his successors. However, the Khārījī Ibn al-Mahdī conquers all of their holdings except for 'Adan.

The death of al-Malika al-Sayyida (p. 279)

Upon the death of al-Malika al-Sayyida, the *dā'ī* al-Dhu'ayb b. Mūsā becomes her successor in the Ṭayyibī *da'wa*. In her last will and testament (*waṣīyya*), and after an introduction consisting of prayers invoking the Prophet, the *ahl al-bayt* and the Imams, and ending with the mention of the Imam al-Ṭayyib, al-Malika al-Sayyida lists her belongings. The list is a detailed description of each of the various items among her treasures. The document was written one year and a month before the death of al-Malika al-Sayyida which occurred on 1 Sha'bān 532/14 April 1138. The entire treasure was donated by al-Malika al-Sayyida to the hidden Imam al-Ṭayyib (*qurbānan taqarribat bihi ilā al-imām al-Ṭayyib*). She specified that Aḥmad b. Abi'l-Ḥusayn b. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī was to be the guardian of her testament (*walīy waṣīyyatihā*).

The qualities of al-Malika al-Sayyida (p. 294)

In this section, Idrīs describes al-Ḥurra al-Malika al-Sayyida as 'perfect in noble qualities, possessing a strong voice, and the ability to read and write, memorize poetry and historical narratives.'

Praise (*madā'ih*) for al-Malika al-Sayyida (p. 295)

Idrīs includes here some poems in praise of al-Malika al-Sayyida. He recounts the strife between the poet al-Khaṭṭāb and his brother Sulaymān. Al-Khaṭṭāb joins the Ṣulayḥids, while his brother is on the side of the Najāhids. Al-Khaṭṭāb eventually kills his brother. Al-Khaṭṭāb becomes the most important *dā'ī* in Yaman after al-Dhu'ayb b. Mūsā.³⁷

The burial of al-Malika al-Sayyida (p. 303)

Idrīs reports that al-Malika al-Sayyida died in the city of Dhū Jibla and was buried in a house adjacent to the mosque of Dhū Jibla, to the right of the *qibla*. Idrīs reports that many people in his day still came to visit her grave.

Mourning for al-Malika al-Sayyida (p. 305)

Idrīs includes poems in mourning for the death of al-Malika al-Sayyida by the *qāḍī* al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Imrān b. al-Faḍl al-Yāmī and by Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ‘Imrān b. al-Faḍl al-Yāmī.

The Ṭayyibī *da‘wa* in Yaman after al-Malika al-Sayyida (p. 307)

The Zuray‘ids lose the area of Ta‘izz, al-Janad and Dhū Jibla to Ibn al-Mahdī. However, ‘Adan and al-Dumluwa remain under the rule of the Zuray‘ids until the arrival of the Ayyūbids in Yaman in 569/1175. In Ṣan‘ā’, after the coming of the *qāḍī* al-Rashīd to Yaman, the sons of Ḥātim b. al-Ghashīm al-Mughallasī follow the Ḥāfiẓī *da‘wa*. Ḥātim b. Aḥmad al-Majīdī b. ‘Imrān al-Faḍl al-Yāmī gains control over the city in 533/1138–9. He is succeeded by his son ‘Alī b. Ḥātim who consolidates control over the north of Yaman. With the arrival of the Ayyūbid Tūrānshāh in the city in 570/1174,³⁸ ‘Alī b. Ḥātim’s rule ends in the city and he flees to the fortress of Birāsh.

The later Fatimids in Egypt (p. 310)

In this section, Idrīs mentions briefly the death of ‘Abd al-Majīd al-Ḥāfiẓ and summarizes the events of the reigns of his successors al-Zāfir (544–549/1149–1154), al-Fā‘iz (549–555/1154–1160) and al-‘Āḍid (555–567/1160–1171). He describes this period as one of strife and confusion in the caliphal palace in Cairo, during which the affairs of the *da‘wa* suffered greatly. In the reign of al-‘Āḍid, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf b. al-Ayyūb is named the *wazīr* to the caliph and begins to prepare for the end of Fatimid rule in Egypt.

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn takes control of Egypt (p. 314)

Idrīs concludes his historical survey with the origins of the Ayyūbid dynasty. He includes several poems by the Ṭayyibī *dāʿī* Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir al-Ḥārithī and the poet-historian ʿUmāra al-Yamanī marking the end of the Fatimid dynasty in Egypt.

The concealment of the Ṭayyibī Imams (p. 319)

A long doctrinal epistle completes the seventh book of the *ʿUyūn al-Akḥbār* of Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn. This letter provides, in the Prophetic Traditions (*aḥādīth*) and the sayings of the Imams, the basis for the concealment of al-Ṭayyib. Here also is material relating to the treatises of the 'Sincere Brethren' (*Rasāʿil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*). The author of this epistle explicitly denies any relation between the concealment of the Ṭayyibī Imams and the movement of the Kaysāniyya, or with the occultation of the twelfth Imam of the Twelver Shīʿa.

Notes

The following brief notes contain selective references and explanations to facilitate the reading of the English summary of the Arabic text. For full citations of all sources, most especially those in Arabic, see the editor's notes to the text itself.

1. On the Ṣulayḥids in general see G.R. Smith, 'Ṣulayḥids,' *EI2*, vol. 9, pp. 815–17.
2. On Ibn Ḥawshab see W. Madelung, 'Manṣūr al-Yaman,' *EI2*, vol. 6, pp. 438–39, and Heinz Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids*, tr. M. Bonner (Leiden, 1996), pp. 31–38.
3. Al-Zāhir reigned from Shawwāl 411/Feb. 1021 to Ṣafar 427/Jan. 1036.
4. Al-Mustaṣhir succeeded al-Zāhir in 427/1036.
5. A mountainous region of Yaman. For a more precise description see A.K. Irvine, 'Ḥarāz,' *EI2*, vol. 3, p. 178.
6. On al-Sharīf al-Rassī, known to Zaydī sources as Jaʿfar b. al-Qāsim al-ʿIyānī, see Wilferd Madelung, 'The *Sirat al-amūrayn al-ajallayn al-sharīfayn al-fādūlayn al-Qāsim wa-Muḥammad ibnay Jaʿfar ibn al-Imām al-Qāsim b. ʿAlī*

al-ʿIyānī as a Historical Source,’ in *Studies in the History of Arabia, I: Sources for the History of Arabia, Part 2. Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Studies in the History of Arabia* (Riyadh, 1979), vol. 2, pp. 69–70.

7. On the Najāhids and the Najāhid dynasty in the Tihāma, see R. Strothmann and G.R. Smith, ‘Nadjāhids,’ *EL2*, vol. 7, pp. 861–62.

8. This is the Arabian coastal plain. See G.R. Smith, ‘Tihāma,’ *EL2*, vol. 10, pp. 481–82.

9. ‘Umāra was a poet and historian, active in Egypt at the end of the Fatimid dynasty. On him see P. Smoor, ‘Umāra al-Yamanī,’ *EL2*, vol. 10, p. 836, his ‘Umāra’s Elegies and the Lamp of Loyalty,’ *Annales Islamologiques*, 34 (2000), pp. 467–564; and A. Fuʿād Sayyid’s Introduction to this volume.

10. On the *ashraf* (sing. *sharīf*) of Mecca, see W. Montgomery Watt and others, ‘Makka,’ *EL2*, pp. 144–52.

11. Ismail K. Poonawala, ‘al-Muʿayyad fiʾl-Dīn,’ *EL2*, vol. 7, pp. 270–71.

12. Al-Falāḥī was the Fatimid *wazīr* from 436/1044 to 440/1048.

13. On this great-grandson of the famous al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, see Richard J.H. Gottheil, ‘A Distinguished Family of Fatimide Cadis (al-Nuʿmān) in the Tenth Century,’ *Journal of American Oriental Studies*, 27 (1906), pp. 217–96.

14. Al-Tustarī’s death is reported in other sources as occurring on 3 Jumādā I 439/26 October 1047.

15. On Ibn Muslima, the Abbasid caliph’s *wazīr* at this time (437/1045 to 450/1058) see Cl. Cahen, ‘Ibn al-Muslima,’ *EL2*, vol. 3, pp. 891–92. For the Saljūq Sultan see C.E. Bosworth, ‘Ṭoghril (I) Beg,’ *EL2*, vol. 10, pp. 553–54.

16. M. Canard, ‘al-Basāsīrī,’ *EL2*, vol. 1, pp. 1073–75.

17. Al-Basāsīrī entered Baghdad on the 8th of Dhuʾl-Qaʿda 450/27 December 1058.

18. The Ismaili *daʿwa* was divided into twelve separate ‘peninsulas’ (*jazīras*), on which see F. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 228–29.

19. On this Zirid ruler (407/1016–454/1062) see M. Talbi, ‘al-Muʿizz b. Bādīs,’ *EL2*, vol. 7, pp. 481–84.

20. On this work see A. Fuʿād Sayyid’s Introduction to this volume.

21. On Lamak b. Mālik al-Ḥammādī, see Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, pp. 209–210, 214, 279, 284–85, and 298.

22. A. Hamdani, ‘The Dāʿī Ḥātim Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmīdī (d. 596 H./

1199 A.D.) and his Book *Tuhfat al-Qulūb*,⁷ *Oriens*, 23–24 (1970–1971), pp. 258–300.

23. On this Zaydī *sharīf* see Madelung, ‘The Sīrat al-amīrayn,’ pp. 69 and passim.

24. On the rank of *ḥujja* in the Ismaili hierarchy, see Daftary, *The Ismā‘īlīs*, pp. 127–28, and his ‘Sayyida Ḥurra: The Ismā‘īlī Ṣulayḥid Queen of Yemen,’ in Gavin G.R. Hambly, ed., *Women in the Medieval Islamic World* (New York, 1998), pp. 117–30.

25. Idrīs is in error here. Badr died in 487/1094, some months before al-Mustanṣir. On his son see G. Wiet, ‘al-Afḍal b. Badr al-Djamālī,’ *El2*, vol. 1, pp. 215–16.

26. On al-Āmir, the tenth Fatimid caliph (b. 490/1096), see S.M. Stern, ‘al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh,’ *El2*, vol. 1, p. 440.

27. This treatise is commonly known as *al-Hidāya al-Āmiriyya*, on which see S.M. Stern, ‘The Epistle of the Fatimid Caliph al-Āmir (al-Hidāya al-Āmiriyya)- Its Date and its Purpose,’ *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1950), pp. 20–31, reprinted in his *History and Culture in the Medieval Muslim World* (London, 1984), article X.

28. On Ibn Najīb al-Dawla, see Daftary, *The Ismā‘īlīs*, p. 285.

29. Ibn Khallikān’s important work has been translated into English by W.M. de Slane under the title of *Biographical Dictionary* in four volumes (Paris, 1842–71). The passage Idrīs quotes here appears there in the biography of al-Afḍal, vol. 1, pp. 612–15.

30. At this point Idrīs confuses Jawāmard, a senior palace servant, with al-Ma’mūn al-Baṭā’ihī, the new *wazīr*. On the latter see D.M. Dunlop, ‘al-Baṭā’ihī,’ *El2*, vol. 1, pp. 1091–92.

31. On al-Dhu’ayb b. Mūsā al-Wādi‘ī, who was the first Ṭayyibī *dā‘ī muṭlaq*, see Daftary, *The Ismā‘īlīs*, pp. 285–86, 298.

32. Again Idrīs is wrong about the date: al-Āmir was murdered in 524/1130, not 526/1132.

33. Abū ‘Alī Aḥmad, also known as Kutayfāt, was the grandson of Badr al-Jamālī and the son of al-Afḍal.

34. On these developments see S.M. Stern, ‘The Succession to the Fatimid Imam al-Āmir, the Claims of the later Fatimids to the Imamate, and the Rise of Ṭayyibī Ismailism,’ *Oriens*, 4 (1951), pp. 193–255.

35. Idrīs uses the term ‘al-Majīdiyya,’ which derives from the name ‘Abd al-Majīd al-Ḥāfiẓ, to refer to the followers of the last four Fatimid caliphs in Egypt and their supporters in Yaman. For details see Daftary, *The Ismā‘īlīs*, pp. 30, 256, 268–70, 273–84, 286–87.

36. On the history of the Zuray‘ids in Adan and its relationship to the

Ḥāfizī *da'wa*, see Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs*, pp. 209, 256, 276–81, 284, 286, 663 n. 86.

37. On al-Khaṭṭab, see Ismail K. Poonawala, *al-Ṣulṭān al-Khaṭṭab: ḥayātuhu wa shi'ruhu* (2nd ed., Beirut, 1999), especially pp. 73–145.

38. On Tūrānshāh b. Ayyūb, who was the older brother of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (Saladin) and conquered Yaman in 569/1173 for the Ayyūbids, see G.R. Smith, 'Tūrānshāh b. Ayyūb,' *EI2*, vol. 10, p. 673.

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